Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5108th meeting

Monday, 10 January 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mayoral	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-20296 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of condolences and minute of silence for the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the Security Council, to express profound sympathy and condolences to the Governments and peoples affected by a powerful earthquake which struck the west coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, on 26 December, triggering a catastrophic tsunami that moved through neighbouring parts of the Indian Ocean. Over 150,000 people, including tourists from a wide range of countries, lost their lives, and many more were injured and made homeless.

I request members to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of those who so tragically lost their lives in that unprecedented disaster.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Expression of welcome to the new members of the Security Council and of thanks to the outgoing members

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council this year, I should like to extend very warm wishes for a fruitful new year to all members of the Security Council, the United Nations and the Secretariat.

Argentina began its term of office as an elected member of the Security Council on 1 January 2005. During the first month of our membership we have assumed the presidency of this important organ of the United Nations. We promise to carry out this singular responsibility with a renewed commitment to the indispensable work of the United Nations and the ideals of the Charter.

At the same time, in presiding over this first meeting of the Council of 2005, I am happy to welcome the other new members: Denmark, Greece, Japan and the United Republic of Tanzania. We all look forward with confidence to their participation in the work of the Council. Their experience and wisdom will be of invaluable assistance in the discharge of the Council's enormous responsibilities.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express the Council's deep gratitude to the outgoing members — Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain — for their important contributions to the business of the Council.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to pay a sincere tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Baali, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Council during the month of December 2004. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Baali for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Afghanistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Arnault to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security

Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Arnault: I would like to thank you, Sir, for having given me this opportunity to brief the Council at this early date on developments in Afghanistan and on our plans for the coming months. It is very gratifying that the Council has made Afghanistan one of its very first subjects for discussion on this year's agenda. The presidential election on 9 October 2004 and the recent appointment of the Cabinet have brought with them new momentum in the Afghan peace process. It is very important for the Afghans and for us in the international community to take full advantage of this circumstance, to move the Bonn agenda forcefully forward and to fulfil, as much as possible, this year, the broad objectives of the transition.

As the Council is aware, on 7 December 2004 President Karzai was sworn in, together with his two vice-presidents. Before and after his inauguration, the President held protracted consultations regarding the formation of his Cabinet. That was a complex exercise involving, on the one hand, the need to increase the number of qualified professionals to lead the ministries — a requirement implicit in the new Constitution and a strong popular demand — and, on the other hand, the need to ensure adequate political and ethnic representation.

The outcome of those consultations was made public on 23 December. The composition of the 27-member Cabinet does indeed meet the requirements of the Afghan constitution, and all ministers have higher education and hold only Afghan citizenship. It also reflects broadly the ethnic composition of the country, with 10 Pashtuns, eight Tajiks, five Hazaras, two Uzbeks, one Turkmen and one Baloch. Three women are in the Cabinet, among them the only female presidential candidate, Mrs. Masuda Jalal.

Of course, the composition of the Cabinet will not escape criticism from one quarter or another. But the consultations that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has held with political parties, representatives of civil society and communities in various regions indicate that the majority of Afghans welcome the composition of the new Cabinet and see it as a sign of the increasingly national character of the Afghan Government. That is in contrast to the mitigated — and sometimes critical — reaction of public opinion after the 2002 Emergency Loya Jirga, which many saw as overly influenced by factional considerations and as a missed opportunity to establish a truly representative central government. This vote of confidence in the new Cabinet will no doubt increase the authority and the effectiveness of the Government as it tackles some very complex, urgent and difficult tasks on the national agenda, including the holding of local and parliamentary elections this year, expanded disarmament and demobilization and counter-narcotics endeavours.

Let me turn to the first of those tasks. The Council may recall that, with its endorsement, the electoral commission decided last year to split the electoral process in two and indicated that the parliamentary elections would be held in the Afghan month of Saur 1383 — between 21 April and 21 May 2005. A variety of considerations were behind that decision. One concerned a number of key legal and administrative prerequisites that were not met on time. Another related to the need to bring about further disarmament and a political environment conducive to free and transparent elections, in particular at the provincial and district levels, where the militarization inherited from decades of civil war was most likely to affect and distort the electoral process. Both we and the electoral commission felt that, given the complete absence of any electoral tradition or practice in Afghanistan, the relatively simpler presidential election would well serve all actors involved in the election as a rehearsal for the much more complex set of elections involved in the parliamentary process. In that respect, all observer organizations — international and domestic — have issued useful recommendations that are being taken into account in the ongoing preparations for the upcoming elections.

The centrepiece of those preparations is the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission called for by the Constitution. Its appointment, which is a presidential prerogative, is an opportunity to implement some of the lessons learned from the presidential election, in particular the need for closer consultation with the large number of new political parties — approximately 50 — that have been registered since last year and which need to develop more confidence in the operation of the electoral

authority. In the past few weeks, we have been working with the President's Office to elicit the views and recommendations of political parties and community leaders on that matter, and we can expect that the new Commission will be appointed in the very near future.

In addition to the creation of the new Independent Electoral Commission, we expect that the parliamentary elections will see an enhanced role for Afghans throughout the process. That will be the case with the organization of the elections, where, overall, the Afghan personnel performed very well during the presidential election. And it will also be the case with domestic observation and political parties. Indeed, in a few months, local elections will take the electoral competition to many parts of the country to which international observers are unlikely to have easy access. Domestic observers and the action of party monitors will therefore bear much of the responsibility for ensuring that local elections are fair and credible. From that standpoint, the presidential election was a promising start. We therefore expect that the recruitment and the training of those observers and monitors will play a major role in safeguarding the integrity of the upcoming electoral process.

In order to meet the April-May target date, the Government and the electoral authorities have to make a number of decisions: on the participation of refugees and nomads; the demarcation of district boundaries; the population figures for each province; the preparation of voter lists; and the revision of the electoral law. The most urgent of those decisions concerns the assignment of population settlements to districts, a task which, under the electoral law, must be completed 120 days before election day. For elections to take place within the agreed time frame, district boundaries must therefore be finalized within the next couple of weeks at the very latest. The Ministry of Interior, which is in the lead for that process, has indicated that good progress has been made, and it is hoped that decisions are imminent.

One important piece of legislation that remains outstanding concerns the powers of the local councils that are to be elected together with the representatives to the lower house. The creation of elected bodies at the district and provincial levels is an innovation in the Afghan political system brought about by the new Constitution. Their functions relative to existing administrative structures must be defined well ahead of the elections. A mission of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on local governance, which visited Afghanistan last month, has recommended a gradualist approach to the empowerment of those bodies. More specifically, it suggested that for the time being, those councils could be given a local-level advisory role to the executive body. Further consultations must take place on that issue before legislation is passed.

That complex preparatory work is pursued, as I said, with the April-May target in mind, and a final decision on the election date will have to be made by the new Independent Electoral Commission in the next few weeks. Political leaders and representatives of the international community agree that the gap between presidential and parliamentary elections should be kept to a minimum, but they have also noted that this should not be achieved at the expense of a well organized and transparent election with adequate time for technical and political requirements to be properly met.

With regard to the management of electoral operations, we have streamlined international support in order to capitalize on the proven strengths of each international partner. UNDP will continue to oversee trust fund management and donor relations, in addition to contributing to support for electoral observation. The United Nations Office for Project Services, which has demonstrated its flexibility in administrative and logistical matters, will be the executing agency for all budget lines.

That brings me to the very important matter of the funding required for the holding of the 2005 elections. Depending on the date they are held, it is estimated that between $120 million and $130 million will be needed to cover the three elections. If the Government should decide to hold out-of-country elections in Iran and Pakistan, an additional $30 million at least would need to be added to that estimate. UNDP is in the process of closing the books of the voter registration and the presidential election projects. Once that is completed, leftover funds will be allocated to the parliamentary elections. We will make appeals to the international community for the remainder of the funding needed as soon as the date of the elections has been decided, since, as I said, different time frames require different budgets.

I should add that, from the operational standpoint, it is anticipated that the modalities for the 2005 elections will closely follow those of the 2004 elections. The

location and the number of polling sites — 25,000 — was based on registration figures and proposals from communities. There is therefore no reason to alter those basic parameters. Similarly, logistical arrangements for the deployment of personnel and material will, in the main, be replicated with the assistance of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the coalition.

Turning to the issue of security, the deployment of the National Army and professional police will gain additional relevance for the parliamentary elections, for which close to 400 district elections will need to be secured. I am pleased to report that the Afghan National Army, currently at 28 battalions — a force of approximately 17,000 — is expected to increase to 32 battalions by April and to 39 battalions by July. The size of the reformed and trained Afghan National Police is also expected to increase from approximately 30,000 members currently to more than 37,000 by April and more than 45,000 by July.

While the Afghan police and army will play a major role in the 2005 elections, as they did in the 2004 election, international forces will remain indispensable for providing security and for backing up national agencies. ISAF and the coalition have indicated their full support for the next election and have noted that their most urgent requirement is that an electoral time frame be in place as soon as possible in order to enable them to adjust their plans.

Finally, we must have in mind the type of security challenges that the United Nations itself will be facing. While the abduction of three United Nations electoral workers in October was brought to a successful conclusion — and I should take this opportunity to thank those Governments that had a very significant involvement in securing that release — and, while the overall security environment has shown signs of improvement in recent weeks, the kidnapping and killing of a United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) subcontracted staff member on 15 December is a reminder of the possibility that the targeting of international personnel could occur again and perhaps become more routine once winter conditions recede and the movement of anti-Government forces becomes easier.

This issue must be tackled in a comprehensive manner. The United Nations Country Team has addressed this problem through a comprehensive security assessment. Its overall conclusions are that the security situation remains very diverse in different parts of the country; that adequate measures must be taken that will provide United Nations agencies and electoral operations accessibility to risk-prone regions; and that the strict observance of minimum operational security standards, which enabled the United Nations to carry out its mandate in 2004, should enable us to operate in the same manner once again in 2005.

Let me turn now to developments in other areas that will have a bearing on the environment in which the elections will be taking place.

The Council is well aware of the fact that the narcotics industry and the accompanying corruption are now clearly one of the biggest threats to the building of an effective, democratic Afghan State and to the country's long-term peace and stability. Opium cultivation remains one of the largest sources of illegal income and serves to support criminal and factional agendas that aim to undermine the central Government.

One of the most worrisome aspects of the narcotics industry is the extent to which the Afghan economy and, therefore, the population now depend on it. Valued in 2004 at $2.8 billion, the opium economy is now equivalent to about 60 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. It is estimated that in 2004, 356,000 families were involved in opium-poppy cultivation — an increase of 35 per cent from 2003. Poppy cultivation has also spread to 34 provinces and now accounts for 56 per cent of total cultivated land.

The central Government has shown a commitment to tackling the problem. We welcome the recent establishment of the new Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, and we welcome also the holding in December by President Karzai of a national conference on counter-narcotics, attended by governors, chiefs of provincial police departments, tribal elders from throughout the country, relevant ministries, and representatives of donor countries, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations. President Karzai spoke resolutely about the need to eliminate the drug problem from Afghanistan, warning that Afghanistan could very well become a pariah State should counter-narcotics efforts fail. Since that event, significant numbers of farmers in the east and the south have been replacing poppy with wheat. That is, of course, a very welcome development, even though the extent to which those

initiatives will make a dent in poppy production can be determined only during the harvesting month, in April.

At the same national conference in December, the Government officially launched the national narcotics eradication programme, which is due to focus on seven key provinces in a staggered fashion until July 2005. The national programme will include the provision of alternative livelihoods for poppy-growing farmers, the extension of drug law enforcement, the implementation of drug-control legislation, the establishment of effective institutions, and the introduction of programmes aimed at prevention and at treatment for addicts. Governor-led programmes will also be implemented in other provinces.

In order to counterbalance the potentially negative impact of eradication initiatives, it is critical that alternative livelihood programmes be strengthened and made known to affected communities. It is also crucial that the Government develop further its ongoing counter-narcotics public information campaign and disseminate its messages through traditional and community-based channels.

I mentioned earlier that disarmament and demobilization had been a key consideration in deciding on the date and modalities of the elections. Indeed, it has been and remains a constant concern of Afghans that elections should take place when a proper political environment has been created through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). That concern applies particularly to local elections, where a web of political interests and armed groups could significantly distort the electoral process.

The Security Council will recall that, in the most recent briefing to the Council on Afghanistan two months ago, we reported that 22,000 ex-combatants had been disarmed and that 75 per cent of the total number of heavy weapons in the country had been cantoned. I am pleased to inform the Council that, since then, significant progress has been made, particularly in the past few weeks, under the combined influence of the momentum of the presidential election and the good work done by the Ministry of Defence and the international community under the lead of the Government of Japan.

To date, 33,000 militiamen have been disarmed, and the heavy weapons cantonment programme is almost complete. More than 63,000 names have been removed from the payroll, which, to a large extent, included ghost units rather than real militia forces. Given the rate of actual disarmament compared to the official strength of militia forces, we can now assume that, of the residual 40,000 names on the original list, only 20,000 to 30,000 really exist and have yet to be disarmed. If the DDR momentum is sustained, and if the remaining obstacles are removed, we can therefore reasonably expect the disarmament and demobilization of the Afghan militia forces to be completed according to the schedule agreed at the Berlin Conference last year — that is, by June 2005 — with reintegration activities for those demobilized continuing until 2006.

Improved access to large stocks of heavy weapons and ammunition in areas where cantonment operations had been previously hampered — particularly in Herat, Mazar and the north-west — has accelerated progress of this important aspect of DDR. Throughout Afghanistan, Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) — the United Nations DDR programme — has cantoned and disabled close to 8,000 heavy weapons thus far. That figure vastly exceeds the surveyed total of operational and repairable heavy weapons in the country, originally estimated at only approximately 4,200. Cantonment of heavy weapons is now complete in the east, south-east, south, north-west and central highlands.

Access has also been gained to large stocks of ammunition in areas previously off-limits to disarmament activities. Those stocks also proved to be much larger and often more dangerous than expected and pose considerable challenges in terms of disposal or storage for the purpose of re-utilization by the Afghan National Army. The Ministry of Defence, with the support of the international community under Canada's lead, has embarked on the complex task of managing the ammunition that has been discovered. An ammunition survey has begun in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat, the two locations considered to have the most substantial stocks.

It is important to note that DDR has been particularly successful in northern Afghanistan. The requirement under the new political party law that units with links to political organizations must comply with DDR before a political organization can be registered has resulted in considerable disarmament in that area. In particular, practically all military divisions under the control of General Dostum have now begun the DDR process. Broad disarmament will, hopefully, contribute

to stabilizing a region that has been particularly prone to inter-factional conflict over the past three years.

Let me take the opportunity to flag the importance of providing the DDR programme with adequate resources. Unless fresh funds to cover the cost of running a complex disarmament programme are provided to ANBP, the programme will suffer delays, and the momentum built since the presidential election could be lost.

Let me add one important point with regard to DDR. Since the inception of the programme in 2003, DDR has focused so far only on militia forces formally affiliated with the Ministry of Defence. While this DDR programme is progressing well, a large number of miscellaneous irregular forces were not included in the programme and continue to exist throughout the country. Some — although not all — of those forces are among the main sources of insecurity and human rights abuses in certain parts of the country, and their activities are frequently linked to drug cultivation and the drug trade. In order to create a secure environment for parliamentary elections, the new Government therefore must, as a matter of priority and with the support of the international community, tackle the problem of irregular militias.

As the Council is well aware, the consolidation of peace can and usually will mean very different things in different countries. In the case of Afghanistan, it has been the international consensus since the Bonn Agreement that the principal answer to the challenges of terrorism, factionalism and the narcotics industry lies in the building of a strong, effective, balanced and representative Government that is able to carry out the will of the overwhelming majority of Afghans to live in peace under the law, protected from violent extremism and from those political and ethnic divisions that have fuelled the conflicts of the past two decades.

Last year's presidential election showed the determination with which the Afghans embrace that vision. The repeated failure of extremists to derail the electoral process, combined with the better performance of security forces, point today to the possibility that the current improvement in the overall security situation will be sustained. Further DDR will create a better environment not only for the upcoming elections, but also for the expansion of civilian administration, reconstruction and the restoration of the rule of law.

Such an advance towards the goal of an effective Afghan State is, in our view, a very real prospect. But that is no reason for complacency on the part of the international community — quite the contrary — because such progress is predicated upon continued high levels of international assistance — military, economic and political — and because the narco-economy now constitutes a distinct challenge to State-building in Afghanistan, and bringing it under control will require additional efforts by the Afghans, but also by the international community.

Let me conclude, therefore, by calling upon the Security Council to continue, throughout 2005, to provide vigorous leadership to the international community in support of the peace process in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Arnault for the information he has provided us.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5109

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5109th meeting

Tuesday, 11 January 2005, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mayoral	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Danforth

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan pursuant to paragraphs 6, 13 and 16 of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), and paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1574 (2004) (S/2005/10).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-20461 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan pursuant to paragraphs 6, 13 and 16 of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 1564 (2004) and paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1574 (2004) (S/2005/10)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and head of the peace support operation.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Pronk to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them photocopies of the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan pursuant to paragraphs 6, 13 and 16 of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 1564 (2004) and paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1574 (2004). The report will be issued under the symbol S/2005/10.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and head of the peace support operation. I now give the floor to Mr. Pronk.

Mr. Pronk: The Council has before it the report on the month of December, which was drafted by us quite some time ago: it is now 11 January. I will try to concentrate in particular on an update in the light of developments, in particular since the end of the month.

Like some members of the Council, I flew straight to New York from Nairobi, where I participated in the signing ceremony of the comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. That was a milestone. It heralds the definitive end of nearly four decades of brutal conflict. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed. Four million have been uprooted and displaced. More than half a million have had to take refuge in neighbouring countries.

The people of the Sudan can be congratulated. The peace agreement is the result of political talks at the negotiation table. A war can be ended other than by winning and defeating the enemy. A war — a civil war also — can be ended by talking one's way out of it, by negotiating with former enemies and accommodating mutual concerns, by closing the book and by not focusing anymore on past divisions and past splits but on future diversity in unity and unity in diversity. That is what happened in Naivasha and was confirmed two days ago in Nairobi.

Of course, the agreement is not the end of everything. An agreement at the negotiation table marks the beginning of a long and arduous process of peacebuilding within society itself. There will be many stumbling blocks on the road ahead. Former combatants will have to be disarmed and demobilized. Displaced people and refugees will need to return and participate in the economy and in society, claiming a share in the resources, including land. Former battlefields will have to be demined so that there are no no-go areas in a time of peace. Other southern militant groups that did not participate in the peace talks will have to be incorporated in new structures that were created without them. And people's expectations concerning welfare, growth, education and other social and economic needs have to be met. All those tasks are as much a risk as they are a challenge. Failure may endanger stability and feed new conflicts.

Anyway, the first step has been taken and its importance cannot be overestimated. There is no room for cynicism. An end has come to the century's longest war in Africa, with the largest number of victims. Peace has been proclaimed, and now the Sudanese themselves, together with their partners in the international community, are going to make it work.

Can such a scenario also apply in Darfur? Yes, it can. It must. We can make it work. As a matter of fact, the question is two-fold: first, how would further fighting in Darfur impact the implementation of the north-south peace agreement, and, secondly, how can the achievement of peace between the northern and southern Sudan be used to improve the climate for talks to end civil war in Darfur?

The first question has already been answered by many members of the Security Council in their statements at the historic meeting of the Council in Nairobi in November last year. It is hard to imagine that the peace dividends promised by the Nairobi Agreement will be reaped without an end to the suffering in Darfur. International aid will not flow and, more importantly, in the Sudan itself the achievements will turn out to be vulnerable. As long as there is war in some part of the country, resources will be spent on weapons, not welfare; investors will be reluctant; entrepreneurs will hesitate; young people with brains and initiative will want to leave the country; displaced people will wander around.

Peace is indivisible in the Sudan as well, however large and diversified the country may be. Thus, after the conclusion and signing of the comprehensive peace agreement between north and south, there can be no question as to what the priority tasks for 2005 should be. The fighting in Darfur must be stopped, the conflict must be resolved and the people affected must be able to return to their homes.

At the beginning of this new year, the security situation in Darfur is still bad. The humanitarian situation is poor. Regarding humanitarian access, the picture is mixed. Politically, Darfur finds itself at a stalemate. Let me elaborate on each of those dimensions of the crisis.

On security, new problems came into focus in December. Violence, hitherto a source of fear on the fringes of centres for internally displaced persons and in conflict areas, is seeping into the camps themselves and directly affecting humanitarian workers. Some national staff members of non-governmental organizations have been abducted and are still missing; others are harassed. The internally displaced persons continue to suffer. Refugees are not returning in sufficient numbers to allow the planting of crops to sustain their families for the coming year. The restriction on freedom of movement is causing livestock to be lost on a huge scale.

The armed groups are rearming and the conflict is spreading outside Darfur. Large quantities of arms have been carried into Darfur in defiance of the Security Council decision taken in July. December saw a buildup of arms; attacks on positions, including air attacks; raids on small towns and villages; increased banditry and more looting. New rebel movements are emerging and launching attacks in the area of oil facilities in West Kordofan. We may move into a period of intense violence unless swift action is taken and new approaches are considered.

That is all the more necessary in the light of the poor humanitarian situation. The volume of assistance and access has expanded over the past six months, but the number of conflict-affected people has increased as well, leaving many still beyond the reach of assistance and, consequently, short of food, water, sanitation and shelter. The objective is to meet the international standards for humanitarian assistance per capita — say, for instance, around 2,000 calories per capita per day. In mid-2004, we were far below those standards. Towards the end of the year, we were close to meeting them for food, nutrition and health services, though not for water, sanitation or shelter.

At the same time, the total number of persons to be helped is still increasing, due to recent displacements following the fighting in November and December, and, as a result of the fighting, it is now even more difficult to reach them than before. The fighting now affects humanitarian work more frequently and more directly than bureaucratic restrictions ever did, with fatal, tragic consequences.

The road-clearing operation launched by the Government in December in order to make the roads safe for traffic, including commercial traffic, and the transport of fuel and food for the markets, as well as for humanitarian purposes, resulted at first not in more safety but in less. The looting and pillaging continued; banditry is on the increase; trucks have been stolen at gunpoint and some drivers killed.

Talks between the parties on Darfur have not yielded concrete results or much narrowing of the gap on the issues concerned. Despite regular statements to the contrary, the parties have yet to commit in practice to the implementation of the humanitarian ceasefire. The delay in reaching agreement between Khartoum

and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement has also produced a stalemate in the talks on Darfur. This applies both to the implementation of the Ndjamena ceasefire agreement and to the Abuja talks on the political dimension of the conflict.

This stalemate at the negotiating table has led to a worsening of the security situation on the ground, and that, in turn, has not contributed to the willingness of the parties to engage in a dialogue on the root causes of the conflict and on political objectives and reform. Standstill is regress and regress produces a vicious circle: meagre results at the negotiating table, no implementation, more insecurity, less willingness to talk, no results and so on.

From now on, that can change. It ought to change. Now that the bridge has been crossed in Nairobi, the road towards security and agreement in Darfur lies open. It is high time to take that road in earnest. Will that be done? In the long term, the signing of the north-south peace agreement offers opportunity for Darfur and will improve capacity to solve the conflict. However, I do not exclude the possibility that the signing of the Agreement will be followed in the short term by an intensification of violence in and around Darfur.

Why? Among those on the ground in Darfur responsible for the recent aggression, there are some who perceive the conclusion of North-South peace as providing cover for their actions, offering them a brief window of immunity from international criticism on their behaviour in Darfur. Government forces may be tempted to think that, after the signing of the north-south agreement, for which they have received much praise, the international community would not dare to put the implementation of that Agreement at risk. That could lead to the suggestion that now is the time to deliver a decisive blow to the enemy. In turn, the rebel movements may perceive the north-south agreement as an indication that they have been marginalized further or as proof that an intensification of military activities would be the only option for them to be taken seriously as a party in political talks.

Both perceptions would be false, both reactions dangerous. Both have to be countered by pressure, reason and the offering of an alternative. The comprehensive agreement will remove some of the stumbling blocks and pave the way for an approach that can help the parties to break through the vicious circle. The parties must be persuaded by a combination of pressure and assurances from influential Member States that it is truly in their interests to respect the ceasefire and to pursue a settlement through peaceful means.

Let me offer some suggestions for such an approach.

First, de-link the talks on the political future of Darfur from those concerning security and humanitarian access. Concentrate the Abuja talks on the future political configuration of Darfur, including questions relating to the sharing of power and wealth. Pursue those talks whether the ceasefire is kept or not, and concentrate the talks relating to security and humanitarian access in the AU Ceasefire Commission and in the Joint Commission.

Second, empower the Darfur ceasefire institutions in the same way as the north-south ceasefire institutions that resulted from the agreement in Nairobi. That means making the assessment of whether or not the ceasefire has been breached independent from the parties and enabling those institutions to make binding recommendations that should be implemented unconditionally.

Third, after Nairobi, both the Government and the rebel movements should exercise full restraint: no attacks, no retaliation. The Government should refrain not only from bombing — which it had already said it would do — but also from carrying out military flights over rebel-held positions. The Government should also refrain from further so-called road-clearing operations. In turn, the rebel movements should refrain from attacks on the police and on towns and infrastructure. The AU could assist by patrolling roads and clearing flights before they take off in the direction of rebel-held areas. That would result in both more protection and less suspicion.

Fourth, in order to show their good will, the Government and the rebel movements should all withdraw behind reasonable and well-defined lines, such as those that prevailed on 8 December, before the commencement of road-clearing operations by the Government. Each should give up the positions it has taken and declare that it will not occupy the positions given up by the other party. Thereafter, the AU could move in to protect the areas concerned. That would be the beginning of a demilitarization of parts of Darfur. The parties should also communicate full details of

their troop locations to the AU Ceasefire Commission and declare their willingness to agree on a plan of separation of forces, to be drawn up by the Commission.

Fifth, the parties must identify practical means to ensure that the basic survival needs of their forces are met, including food supplies for the combatants, without violating the ceasefire. That would stabilize the situation, diminish the urge to steal, loot and kill and make the rendering of relief assistance to people without weapons less dangerous than it has become during the past month.

Sixth, the Government should make a new start by disarming the Popular Defence Forces, as announced in August of last year. It should provide the names and numbers of those disarmed to the AU and store weapons in safe locations, with AU oversight.

Seventh, the rebel movements should commit themselves not to block or disrupt peaceful seasonal movements of nomadic tribes and their cattle. Such actions deprive tribes of their usual source of livelihood and provoke tribal militias into attacking the civilian population. The Government, in turn, should control and restrain those militias, either through force or through tribal reconciliation. In addition, joint action involving the Government, the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) and the African Union should be planned, in order to stop banditry and the bandits.

Eighth, the Government should make haste in arresting those responsible for major violations of human rights and crimes against international humanitarian law. It should do so whether those perpetrators are Janjaweed or not. The Government has often declared that that could not be done easily overnight. That is to be granted. However, it is not credible to wait half a year after the commitment made to the Secretary-General in the joint communiqué of early July. The Government would be wise not to wait for the publication of the report of the Commission of Inquiry, and to show that not only the international community but also the Government itself wants to seriously address crimes, maintain human rights and put an end to impunity.

Many of those eight steps require active and adequate third-party involvement to patrol roads — as I mentioned — clear flights and protect demilitarized areas. That third party is the African Union. The strengthening of the AU force on the ground has proved to be effective, not only in performing monitoring tasks but also, more importantly, in protecting the civilian population through a combination of deterrence, mediation and good offices. By its presence and its actions to mediate and forestall violent actions, the AU force, which is itself currently under threat of attack, has done more than any other outside agent to improve the security situation on the ground. The AU has not been able to put in as many forces as originally hoped, and they need help from the international community to make it happen. We need to do whatever is required to accelerate the rate of deployment and to ensure that we have more AU troops on the ground in order to guarantee the parties' commitment to agreements and to dissuade attacks.

In order to protect both people and their land, those third-party troops have to be everywhere that violence may erupt: in the locations that I mentioned earlier — demilitarized areas and unsafe roads — but also in and around all displaced people's camps, in all towns and villages under threat and in all areas where refugees and displaced persons would want to return. It is an enormous task, but the recent history of Darfur shows that without such an independent and neutral protection force, women and children, older persons, returnees and unarmed persons belonging to adversary tribes will not be safe.

In the longer term, security, safety, peace and stability should be home-grown and sustained without outside help. But it is clear that it will be quite some time before that is a reality. It will also require serious political talks between the Government and the rebel movements, more serious than have taken place thus far. They will have to agree on a declaration of principles that addresses the core issues of power and wealth-sharing. Moreover, it is time to prepare a national conference including all political opponents in order to reach a consensus about the modalities of a peaceful future for the country, thereby integrating the Darfur peace talks into the wider process of peacemaking in the Sudan and making peace in Darfur sustainable.

However, the Darfur talks themselves should not wait until such a national conference is feasible. On the contrary, although the current negotiating process between the Government and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) should proceed, it would be useful to start thinking about including tribal leaders in the

search for political solutions even before reconciliation has taken place. That may include tribes that have thus far been beyond the control of the Government or the rebel movements and that have been fighting to protect their own interests. Parallel to such broader talks, reconciliation efforts will have to be continued, broadened and intensified. The international community would also be wise to support those efforts, including with material assistance on an experimental basis, in order to make clear that home-grown reconciliation is valued, even if it takes place in a different way than it does elsewhere in the world. It is also clear that such reconciliation will have to include those who refused to take up arms and — last but not least — the victims of war and violence.

Can all this be done? The time is ripe to renew and redouble our efforts. The climate is improving. There is a north-south comprehensive peace agreement. We have witnessed positive reactions, both in Rumbek and in Khartoum. We are also seeing positive reactions among the people, in both the north and the south — albeit sometimes mixed with hesitation based on scepticism and earlier experience. We are seeing the parties exercise a certain restraint. Contrary to many people's expectations, the Sudan Liberation Army did not launch an attack on the day of the signing of the peace agreement. From Christmas to that particular day — Sunday — it was relatively calm in Darfur on all fronts. Last week, despite earlier breaches of the ceasefire, all parties declared that they would respect days of tranquillity to vaccinate all children in the Sudan under the age of five against polio. And this weekend, the Government declared that it would be willing to reconsider some of its previous hard-line positions, thereby reaching out to the rebel movements. Yesterday, the same Government followed this up by declaring, before the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council in Libreville, that it is willing to withdraw its force to the pre-8 December positions.

All of this is positive. It is not yet much; nor is it definitive. It could easily fade away. But it is a sign that it is justified to hope and expect that the spirit of Nairobi will affect Darfur. The political momentum is there. It is fragile; it could easily be spoiled. Taking advantage of that momentum requires innovative action, consensus among all international actors, steady cooperation, perseverance and a well defined common strategy.

The second stage of the war between the north and the south lasted two decades. Why should we allow the war in Darfur to last more than two years?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Pronk for his comprehensive briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I would like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5110

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5110th meeting

Wednesday, 12 January 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bielsa	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Muselier
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Noriega

Agenda

The question of Haiti

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-20573 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Representation and welcome to Ministers

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to acknowledge and welcome the presence in the Council Chamber of Her Excellency The Honourable Dame Billie Miller, Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados; His Excellency Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil; His Excellency Mr. Ignacio Walker, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile; His Excellency Mr. Carlos Morales Troncoso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic; His Excellency Mr. Renaud Muselier, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of France; His Excellency Mr. Yvon Siméon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti; and His Excellency Mr. Roger Noriega, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs of the United States.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question of Haiti

The President (*spoke in* Spanish): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Siméon (Haiti) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the usual practice, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Valdés to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the usual practice, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Luigi R. Einaudi, Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Einaudi to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Valdés (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset, Sir, to express my satisfaction at seeing you preside over the Council and to congratulate the Argentine Republic on the excellent manner in which it has been conducting the work of the Council during this first month of the year. I am also extremely grateful to you for having convened this open debate of the Security Council at the ministerial level to consider the situation in Haiti. This meeting is a reflection of the interest of the countries that are friends of Haiti and of the members of the international community in general in the efforts being made by the Government and the people of Haiti to overcome their difficulties. I also warmly welcome the presence here today of the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Mr. Luigi Einaudi.

This meeting also provides a show of political support for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and represents a vote of confidence for the role that the United Nations can play in assisting in the recovery of societies in which a combination of poverty and weak governance lead to internal violence.

I should like to reiterate here my conviction that, if we provide Haiti with continuing international political support, that country will emerge from its present crisis and become reintegrated into international society, in a framework characterized by internal political stability and democratic freedoms.

I should like also to thank the Transitional Government of Haiti for the warm welcome it accorded the Mission and for the relationship based on mutual trust that we have built since the inception of the Mission. The Transitional Government of President Boniface Alexandre and Prime Minister Gérard Latortue have courageously shouldered a very difficult task — one that is not always understood by their compatriots. In a climate of profound national division, they have had to revitalize institutions that were on the verge of collapse, and to deal with forces seeking chaos and destabilization while maintaining sufficient openness to enable the country, with the participation of all, to set out once again on the path towards democratic legitimacy — and that in the framework of a formal commitment to renounce any position of power following the upcoming elections.

Since my last appearance before the Council, on 22 November last, Haiti has embarked on a different phase. Indeed, although security challenges remain complex and factors leading to insecurity and instability have not yet been dealt with, the attempts made last November by armed groups deliberately to destabilize the country were foiled. We have also seen a reduced level of violence and insecurity, and the launching by the Transitional Government of political initiatives has made room for participation by all those who reject violence and made it easier to carry out the electoral process planned for the end of this year in conditions of peace and freedom.

MINUSTAH has almost reached full strength in terms of the authorized number of troops and civil police and has been deploying throughout the country, as described in the recent report of the Secretary-General. As a result, our ability to deal with situations that might jeopardize security and the political transition has improved substantially. As a result, MINUSTAH's recent efforts have focussed essentially on robust and sustained initiatives in the area of security.

It is important to note once again that the security concept that underpins and guides the United Nations Mission includes, on the one hand, the legitimate use of force when necessary or indispensable, and, on the other, a focus on the most urgent problems which affect the more vulnerable people of Haiti. We have thus embarked on a new phase of the Mission, which I will expand upon.

MINUSTAH has taken clear-cut steps towards stabilizing the security situation. Groups of former soldiers who dared to defy the authority of the State and of the Mission had to quickly back down, while other illegal armed groups, which include some who claim to support former President Aristide, are losing ground.

Threats and challenges in the area of security remain serious, but we are gradually beginning to see a greater degree of stability. On 14 December 2004, MINUSTAH launched a major political and military operation jointly with elements of the Haitian National Police in the district of Cité Soleil, in the city of Port-au-Prince — an area that is well known for harbouring criminal armed groups, many of which have different and conflicting political loyalties. The objectives of the operation were to restore order and security in the area through the presence and the firm and ongoing control of MINUSTAH, which will facilitate the gradual restoration of the autonomous functioning of the police in the area, as well as create conditions for the normalization of activities ranging from the proper functioning of the public administration to the reactivation of trade and the relaunching of various types of humanitarian operations at the local and international levels.

Aside from isolated and sporadic gunfire, Operation Liberty, as it was called, did not encounter strong armed resistance and was successful, with no deaths recorded within MINUSTAH or the Haitian National Police. Unfounded allegations that many lives had been lost were completely and thoroughly refuted.

In the first phase of the operation, two police stations were reopened in Cité Soleil, where MINUSTAH forces have an ongoing presence. The deployment of MINUSTAH patrols and the activities of civil servants have made it possible to initiate contacts leading to a variety of quick-impact projects financed by the Mission. In parallel, United Nations agencies will be undertaking new initiatives in the area. We are aware that the inhabitants are still afraid publicly to express their satisfaction at the evident

change that has taken place in terms of improved security. We are therefore convinced that gradual progress in health, sanitation and educational programmes, which were halted for a long time because of the violence, as well as the prompt launching of our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiative, will soon make it possible to bring together and involve Cité Soleil neighbours in a process that will qualitatively change the area, thereby helping to eliminate and dismantle the armed bands that are still active in the area. Likewise, an initiative taken by MINUSTAH and the Transitional Government will make it possible to set up a standing high-level mechanism to identify and prioritize development projects specifically designed for the inhabitants of Cité Soleil.

On 15 December 2004 a group of armed former soldiers, with an authorization illegitimately given by a municipal civil servant, took possession of the abandoned private residence of former President Aristide in Tabarre, in the city of Port-au-Prince. The group convened media representatives and declared that it would set up its new permanent base in that location. The Transitional Government reacted immediately, saying that it would not tolerate such a measure. It fired the municipal civil servant who had given the alleged authorization and called on MINUSTAH to put an end to the occupation of the premises. The Mission responded promptly and deployed a considerable number of soldiers around the captured building. Thanks to MINUSTAH's firm and resolute approach and to a level-headed, sincere and open approach to dialogue, the situation was resolved on 17 December, with no losses. Currently, all who participated in that venture have been disarmed, except for their leader, who is still at large. Some have received advance compensation — which the Government had promised all former combatants. And, as a group, they have agreed to participate in reintegration programmes.

In the past 10 weeks, MINUSTAH has started planning and organizing a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. While we have some of the required resources, and while a work plan will be submitted to government authorities this week, security and political conditions are not yet favourable to the programme's full implementation. We welcome the imminent creation of the disarmament committee, as announced by Prime Minister Latortue; this is essential for developing the process. At the same time, our Mission is closely following the Transitional Government's current policy of granting compensation and severance pay to former members of the Haitian armed forces. The Government of Haiti believes that this is fair compensation for individuals who were demobilized without consideration of rights stemming from their paid contributions during their military career. However, we agree with Haitian authorities that this policy has to be situated within the context of the disarmament process and that after the prompt payment of the first part of the promised amount, any further monetary payment must be conditioned on the surrender of military weapons to the Transitional Government. With respect to the armed groups among marginalized sectors of the population, the disarmament policy contemplates actions to create conditions for reintegration that, while not deviating from our policy of firmness vis-à-vis the challenge those groups represent, can persuade some to return to a working life and to surrender their arms.

The events I have just summarized indicate in practical terms MINUSTAH's course of action and implementation in dealing with the challenge posed by the various armed groups in Haiti, thus fulfilling the mandate of the Security Council: to demonstrate firmness and calm in the use of force in order to ensure respect for law and order and to demonstrate social awareness in order to understand the source of the basic demands of the population. I would like to mention that MINUSTAH troops have undertaken infrastructure work on roads in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, which has helped enormously to establish good relations with the population, in particular among the poorest sectors of the capital.

Events seem to be helping to achieve this strategy, which is vital to our effort to establish a process of national dialogue and ensure that elections are held this year. I note that this policy of the Mission, after difficult periods when the military component of the Mission was not yet fully established, last October, has today led to a substantial improvement in relations between MINUSTAH and the population of Haiti, which has witnessed the soldiers' dedication to tasks aimed at improving the living conditions of the neediest. The way inhabitants applaud at the arrival of digging machines and soldiers carrying pickaxes and shovels to improve the quality of the streets demonstrates the importance of providing the Mission

with a greater number of military engineers and demonstrates the adjustment of the Mission's focus, which always combines deterrent force with the Mission's participation in and support for social development.

The swearing-in on 6 January 2005 of the new representative of the Catholic Church in the Provisional Electoral Council, the Transitional Government's decision to allocate additional funding, the establishment of a mechanism for the disbursal of those funds through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Haiti and the planned disbursal of the financing pledges made by Canada and the European Union allow me to state that the basic technical elements for proceeding with the electoral timetable for 2005 are now in place. That MINUSTAH expects to sustain the progress in security further reinforces that positive climate. It now remains to make progress in the direction indicated in paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 1576 (2004):

> "... to continue to explore actively all possible ways to include in the democratic and electoral process those who currently remain outside the transition process but have rejected violence".

With the support of MINUSTAH, the Provisional Electoral Council benefited from the important and generous contribution of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, which during the last week of November carried out an intense training programme, with the cooperation of its peers from El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Venezuela. The Provisional Electoral Council has completed preparation of the electoral law following, in a gesture of unprecedented openness, the submission of that text for discussion among all public, social and political sectors of the country. The Organization of American States will begin voter registration in March in cooperation with MINUSTAH.

We view with great hope the political decision of the provisional President of Haiti, Mr. Boniface Alexandre, to promote national dialogue during the course of this year. As he has indicated, all sectors of society and all political forces of Haiti without exclusion must take part in that process and shoulder their respective historic responsibilities. In effect, the dialogue must be freely conducted and developed by the Haitians. It is for them, in a climate of mutual respect, to envisage the reconstruction of a community marked by profound social divisions, to deal with the reconstruction of institutions that have been debilitated by the destructive combination of anti-democratic manipulation and corruption, and to revive a political system that had been plagued by political factionalism.

In that context, it is important to welcome the initiative to visit the country and to support the all-inclusive dialogue process on the part of international leaders, such as the Prime Minister of Canada in November, the Secretary of State of the United States on 1 December, the Foreign Minister of Brazil on 20 December and the President of the African Union Commission on 17 December, among others. Their appeals for broader dialogue and reconciliation among Haitians undoubtedly constitutes encouragement for the democrats in the country. I welcome with enthusiasm the upcoming visit to Port-au-Prince of the Foreign Minister of the Argentine Republic this week.

The provisional release of some leaders of Fanmi Lavalas on 23 December 2004 as decreed by the judicial authorities should be interpreted as a step in the right direction. It will make the national dialogue an important factor in the elimination of violence. However, we view with concern the unjustifiable slowness of some trials concerning political leaders. A particularly emblematic case is that of former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, who has been in prison for almost a year without any sign of a decision by the relevant court.

We also note with concern the fact that human rights are being violated and crimes committed with an apparent link to the Haitian National Police. MINUSTAH is participating and cooperating in daily working operations with the Haitian National Police and is committed to investigating some of those incidents.

Correcting those tendencies will undoubtedly ensure the full credibility of and participation in the dialogue and the electoral process. In the context of the national dialogue, MINUSTAH will play a scrupulous and most respectful facilitating role and fulfil its special commitment to providing technical support, substantive bases and secure conditions for ensuring that the dialogue proceeds without hindrance.

(*spoke in French*)

Concerned by the slow implementation of the interim cooperation framework agreements, and at the initiative of the World Bank, I attended the 15 December

meeting of the Contact Group in Washington, D.C. Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate the demands that I made at that time. They included the need for the Transitional Government to select a few projects for priority implementation and for the international community to simplify its financing mechanisms to the greatest extent possible in order to allow infrastructure projects to be undertaken in 2005 so as to give hope and work to thousands of Haitians.

In that connection, it is with great satisfaction that I welcome the World Bank's decision to release $73 million, out of a total of $150 million, following the repayment of arrears by the Haitian Transitional Government. I note that the announcement coincided with the decision by the Government of Canada to find the funding necessary to support the electoral process and with the reiteration by the European Union of its pledge of funding. We hope that all participants in the Core Group will be able to help in raising the funds for the elections.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I commented earlier on the need for ongoing political and economic support for Haiti. Let me conclude with a similar appeal. The process of reintegrating Haiti into the international community, in a framework of internal political stability and democratic freedoms, requires us to make our best and greatest efforts towards its rehabilitation. We all know here that it is ultimately up to the people and Government of Haiti to move forward in the process of national reconciliation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Valdés for his kind and undeserved words addressed to me.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes so that the Council may carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver condensed versions when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti.

Mr. Siméon (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to convey the sincere congratulations of the Haitian delegation to the Argentine delegation for the highly effective manner in which it is guiding the Council's work this month.

I welcome the presence at this special meeting of Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and thank him for the relevant and useful information he has just provided on the situation in Haiti. Naturally, we take note of his recommendations, because we know that they emerge from a very clear-sighted understanding of our problems on the part of a man who, now as in the past, has always proven to be a sincere friend of Haiti and demonstrated his solidarity with and understanding of our people.

I convey to the Council the sincere thanks of the Haitian delegation for the convening of this special meeting, which will enable the Council to make a new assessment of the situation in Haiti. The representation of several delegations at a very high level clearly reflects the interest of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, in the political stabilization of Haiti.

Allow me to convey to the delegations of the Governments and peoples, victims of the devastation caused by the recent tsunami, the sympathies of the Government and the people of Haiti. Our feelings of solidarity also go out to the representatives of non-Asian nations that were also struck by that natural disaster.

My delegation also congratulates Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who, in his report contained in document S/2004/908, has made relevant recommendations on reconfiguring the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

At the Council's meeting on Haiti on 29 November 2004, the Secretary-General recommended in his report that the international community make a long-term commitment to Haiti. My delegation believes that the recommendation was fully justified by the fact that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process already under way is a long-term effort calling for vast resources far in excess of the capacity of a State like Haiti, endowed with limited resources.

The Transitional Government of Haiti duly appreciates the initiatives already undertaken under resolution 1529 (2004) to promote the establishment of a stable and secure climate conducive to economic recovery and preparations for the elections scheduled

for 2005 under the timetable established by the Provisional Electoral Council.

Unfortunately, the security situation in my country, and especially in the working-class neighbourhoods, has deteriorated in recent months. The personnel shortage of the Haitian National Police and the delayed deployment of MINUSTAH troops have complicated efforts to deal with the gangs and to restore order in dangerous areas. Recent weeks, however, have seen a clear improvement thanks to the joint efforts of the National Police and MINUSTAH.

In its desire to establish a stable and secure environment through the disarmament of armed groups, the Government has given special attention to the issue of demobilized military personnel. The commission charged with the management of that matter has been reorganized and strengthened in an effort to make it more effective. We have quickly seen encouraging results. Consequently, many members of Haiti's armed forces received the first instalment of their pensions during the year-end holidays. The process is under way, and we hope soon to be able to provide all former military personnel the full amount of the moneys due them, thereby meeting one of their main demands.

With the assistance of MINUSTAH, the Haitian National Police has peaceably been able to regain control of several police stations illegally occupied by armed groups. All the necessary efforts and resources are being deployed to neutralize the gangs and criminals involved in the pernicious undertaking of destabilization and large-scale terror against the population.

In the area of human rights, the current situation represents a wide-ranging legacy of dictatorship whose political consequences included the disappearance of democratic institutions. Efforts are under way to end impunity, guarantee the independence of the justice system and bring professionalism to the police, thereby establishing an order in which law prevails over violence and force. In that regard, the transition team welcomes the recent release by judicial authorities of a number of detainees who had been held without charges of any sort. Others have been granted provisional release while their cases are investigated.

The provisional President of the Republic and the Transitional Government are well aware of the complexity of the challenges facing Haiti. The interrelated issues of dire poverty, unemployment and illiteracy provide a very fertile breeding ground for a vast range of social excesses and political dealing. The enemies of our country recruit their henchmen and underlings in the poorest environments, skilfully utilizing the distress of the people to attain their sinister political aims. It is therefore vital to thwart those warmongers by promptly putting in place a national economic recovery plan and by improving the living conditions of the people, especially in marginalized areas.

It is truly painful to see that the lack of resources to fund development activities is increasingly compromising the efforts of both the international community and the Government to protect human rights and establish democracy. In that regard, the Transitional Government of Haiti fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendations aimed at quickly meeting the obligations made by lenders to finance the interim cooperation framework. I would therefore like to avail myself of this opportunity to call for understanding on the part of our cooperation partners, which have already demonstrated their determination to help us succeed in the transition, to translate their expressions of solidarity into actions. In that connection, I welcome the initiative of a number of partners, which have already begun to meet the commitments they made at the donors conference held in Washington in July 2004.

The year 2005 will be a crucial one for democracy in Haiti. We are at an important historical crossroads, given the commitment that has been repeatedly voiced by the current governmental team to restore an elected Government by 7 February 2006 that both meets the norms set out in Haiti's 1987 Constitution and the democratic values we all share. In order to do so, the Government is making every effort to facilitate the work of the Provisional Electoral Council. With the swearing in of a new representative from the Catholic Church, the Council has been working at full strength since last week.

We in Haiti have been very pleased to welcome the offers of cooperation made by many of our friends in the international community to ensure that we succeed in that effort. Nevertheless, the scope of the needs continues to be in sharp contrast with the country's limited administrative and financial capacities. We therefore urgently call for substantial support from the international community in that regard. We hope that that support will also include the

deployment of observers to ensure the credibility of the process, and thereby the impartiality of the results.

After the many years of division and bitterness that have gravely damaged the fabric of Haitian society — and given all that entails in terms of social and political instability and frustration among citizens — national reconciliation is now an absolute necessity. We in the Transitional Government are fully aware of that. It is for that reason that the transition team is making every effort to promote the inclusive national dialogue that our fellow citizens and our friends in the international community are fervently calling for. In his new year's message to the nation, our head of State called on all Haitians to set aside their political views and class affiliation and put an end to age-old hatreds in order to take part in that dialogue. We hope that that call will be echoed among all of the country's social groups in order that we may win the battle to save the ship of State. That will necessarily entail success in the political transition, which follows many years of hesitation and evasion.

After two centuries of ineffective political and economic management, the Republic of Haiti is today at the edge of the abyss. Need and abject poverty have reached alarming proportions, and the socio-economic infrastructure is in an advanced state of ruin. We are very pleased that, under the aegis of the United Nations, the international community has come forward to assist us. However, we hope that the international community's commitment to us will not be limited to the political transition alone. Although that is of course a necessary step towards establishing the rule of law and building a society that respects democratic values, a lasting solution to the economic problems facing Haiti entails a more substantial, longer-term commitment on the part of our friends in the international community. More than ever, Haiti needs the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners to assist it to finally emerge from the rut of underdevelopment. On behalf of my delegation, of the Transitional Government of Haiti and of the Haitian people, I therefore express the hope that a consistent and long-term programme of financial and technical assistance will be put in place for Haiti that takes into account the country's real needs in all social, political and economic areas.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Haiti for his kind words addressed to my country.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first of all like to congratulate you, my dear friend Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa, on your excellent conduct of our work and, in particular, on the initiative to convene this public meeting on Haiti. I should also like to highlight the exemplary cooperation between our delegations in the Security Council, with the novel inclusion of an Argentine diplomat in the Brazilian delegation. This is unprecedented in the Council, and attests to the degree of trust between our peoples and Governments.

I should also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, for the wealth of detailed information that he has provided about the situation in the Caribbean country. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate to Ambassador Valdés our grateful acknowledgement of his efforts and dedication at the forefront of the work being carried out by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) — whose military contingent Brazil has the honour to contribute to in a significant way.

The briefing provided by Ambassador Valdés encourages us to continue our work, and I believe his comments about a resolute and level-headed approach in the use of force were truly inspired and should continue to guide our action.

The independence of Haiti — the first country in Latin America to gain its independence — testified to the strength and courage of the millions of Africans who had been transplanted to the Americas as slaves. Since then, for a number of reasons that we have hardly begun to address, the hope embodied by Haiti has not been fulfilled. On the contrary, that brotherly country has occasionally been treated with arrogance, or simply neglected. We — the United Nations, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and Haitians themselves — all have a duty to contribute to the fulfilment of that hope.

It is often said that the success of MINUSTAH is based on three interdependent and equally important pillars: the maintenance of law and order, the political dialogue with a view to bringing about national reconciliation, and the promotion of social and economic development. I was happy to hear both the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister of Haiti, my friend Mr. Yvon Siméon, refer to the need to support the three pillars

together. Those are not three distinct or sequential steps. Simultaneous attention to all three pillars is an indispensable prerequisite for the reconstruction of Haiti. The most important ingredients for peace in Haiti, as anywhere, are hope, trust and legitimacy.

Disarmament is a priority in Haiti. But at the same time, we need to create a disarmament mindset — and that requires political dialogue. Stability in Haiti will not be achieved merely by means of repression.

The challenges that we are facing in Haiti are complex. The crucial responsibility of the Government is to create basic conditions, with the help of MINUSTAH, to strengthen the three pillars to which I referred. We welcome the liberation of three politicians from the Fanmi Lavalas as a fundamental step towards involving all Haitians in the effort of national reconstruction. We must persevere on this path.

We encourage all political parties, all the political forces and all civil society organizations and interest groups in Haiti to join together in this national political dialogue, launched by President Boniface Alexandre with the support of the Government of Prime Minister Latortue. The authorities, in turn, must ensure conditions that allow everyone to participate in the political and electoral debate, without having to fear for their safety.

Simple gestures can be important factors for normalizing life in Haiti. The "Match for Peace" — an initiative by the President of Brazil and the Prime Minister of Haiti — which took place in August between the national soccer teams of Brazil and Haiti demonstrated that, despite all the problems and the seriousness of the situation in Haiti, Haitians have lost neither hope nor the capacity to dream.

The progress achieved over the past three months also demonstrated that the pessimistic analysis of MINUSTAH's security capacity was groundless. We should commend MINUSTAH for the proof that it has provided of its ability to reduce violence while continuing, in a level-headed and resolute manner — as Special Representative Gabriel Valdés said — to discharge its mandate, in accordance with resolution 1542 (2004).

As bad as other tragic situations are elsewhere — which we are following closely, such as current events in Asia, where Brazil, like many others, is trying to help, and which deserve an urgent coordinated response from the international community — we must not allow the degree of priority given to Haiti to diminish. If we consider infant mortality rates in Haiti, for example, it is not an exaggeration to say that, over the past two centuries, that brotherly country has suffered the effects of a genuine social and economic tsunami — and the indifference of the world has had a great deal to do with it.

We must combine the various immediate impact projects so as to restore the hope of the poor and unemployed, with the assistance of Haitian institutions, which can also facilitate the planning of a long-term strategy. I am convinced that, working jointly with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti will make an important contribution to those goals. As some of those here today know, we have long been promoting, under Article 65 of the Charter, closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, which will make it possible to make the provision of assistance by donors and international institutions more transparent. That will be good for everybody, in particular the Government of Haiti, which will be able to make its voice heard in that joint multilateral forum.

As has been said, we must accelerate the disbursement of the pledges made at the donors conference and streamline the procedures. We welcome the release of resources by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which has opened the way for a restoration of the normal flow of international financing. We cannot allow bureaucratic obstacles and management difficulties, however genuine, to continue to delay the flow of resources. In the case of Haiti, to delay help is to forgo it — perhaps forever.

Under the leadership of President Lula, Brazil has been doing whatever it can to help. On 20 December, as Special Representative Valdés said, we signed three cooperation agreements in Haiti, two of which focus on agriculture, with their own resources and working directly with the Government of Haiti. With the World Bank and the Haitian Government, we also signed an agreement to provide $1 million to feed more than 35,000 schoolchildren. According to the World Bank official who was present, that was the first time that the Bank had signed a cooperation agreement with a developing country to help another developing country. We cannot do a great deal in terms of money and

resources, but we would like this to be a source of inspiration for those with more resources.

At the recent Ouro Preto Summit of the Common Market of the South, I signed, with Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, a memorandum of understanding for the development of technical cooperation projects, which will allow for the use of funds already available to the Bank. With the other Rio Group countries, we have discussed a series of other projects that can be carried out, bilaterally, trilaterally or with the cooperation of other organizations.

The indiscriminate use of natural resources in Haiti has had very serious environmental consequences. A national reforestation campaign, with international cooperation, must be part of any strategy for the sustainable development of Haiti.

The fate of Haiti is inseparable from that of its neighbours. The regional isolation of Haiti is in no one's interest. On our part, since the beginning of the crisis and of our participation in MINUSTAH, we have chosen dialogue with the Caribbean Community as a priority, and we have sent several special missions to its member countries in order to familiarize ourselves with their positions. Last November, I had the opportunity and the honour of meeting with four ministers and other high-level representatives of the Caribbean countries during my visit to Barbados under the coordination of Minister Billie Miller, who is with us today. Today, I will travel to Trinidad and Tobago to continue that dialogue with local authorities.

I wish to say that the terrible crisis that Haiti endured in 2004 brought us together and taught us many lessons regarding our own past and present. That is why in Brazil the question of Haiti is not just a political issue; it is a matter that touches the very soul of the Brazilians.

It is up to the Haitians to re-invent their future. The international community cannot replace them in that task, but it would be irresponsible on our part not to offer all the assistance we can. The peoples of America all owe a great historical debt to Haiti. The world must help the Haitians to recover control over their own security, their own future and their national dignity. I am glad to see that in the presidential statement that we will probably adopt, this long-term participation, this long-term effort, is reaffirmed once again.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, my much-admired friend, Celso Amorim, for the generous words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Renaud Muselier.

Mr. Muselier (France) *(spoke in French)*: At the outset, let me thank Minister Rafael Bielsa for having taken the initiative to hold this public debate to address the situation in a country that is particularly close to me and that is linked to France by history and by language. I also wish to commend the presence of the Foreign Minister of Haiti, Mr. Siméon, and the participation of ministers from Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Barbados and the Bahamas, and of the Under-Secretary of State of the United States.

The progress made in Haiti in a year is remarkable. Where the State and democracy had ceased to function according to acceptable norms, a Transitional Government is preparing to hold democratic elections. Where human rights have been flouted, reform of the legal system is under way. Where arms laid down the law, a disarmament process is under way, as attested by the operations pursued jointly on 14 and 15 December against the Chimères in the Cité Soleil and against the former military personnel in Tabarre.

Progress is due first of all to the strength, courage and resolve of the Haitian people, who are overcoming the difficulties in their history. That progress is also the fruit of remarkable mobilization by the international community. We are pleased to have taken the initiative with the United States, Canada and Chile, with the support of the Security Council. After the emergency, the international community has been able to extend its effort to establish suitable conditions for a democratic transition. The United Nations, regional organizations and countries of the American continent have played and continue to play a key role in this mobilization. That commitment must be maintained over time. We have been called on to do that by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti, Mr. Valdés, to whom I wish to pay a special and friendly tribute. With our full support, he is helping to bring about, with courage and determination and in close cooperation with the Transitional Government of Haiti, a sustainable and successful stabilization. I thank him for his very useful report just presented.

To support those efforts, appropriate coordination of all the players in the international community is indispensable and must be maintained, in particular through the Contact Group in Port-au-Prince, New York or Washington. I would also like to commend the action of the Transitional Government, which in difficult conditions is trying to anchor its country in this process of political and economic reconstruction. It enjoys our full support as it carries out that task. Together we have established a sincere dialogue on the basis of ties of friendship that have always united us, beyond the upsets of history.

In spite of this progress, we must not allow ourselves to be complacent; far from it. I see the ground that still must be covered to achieve the objectives we all seek here — namely, a democratic, united and stable Haiti, on track to sustainable development. It is essential that we all remain mobilized in support of the process we have begun. That is why France is represented today at the Government level at the request of the President of the Republic, Jacques Chirac.

I would like to highlight three aspects that strike me as particularly important for the success of the transition. They are part of the same dynamic.

First is the preparation for and holding of democratic elections in the fall of 2005, as scheduled. This is a unique opportunity for the Haitian people to take the future into their own hands. The conditions must be met so that the voting can take place in satisfactory conditions. The near full-strength deployment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since the end of December should help ensure a safe and stable environment. But for that it is also important that the disarmament process be successfully concluded. That is a difficult question, but it must be addressed without concession, not hesitating, if necessary, to make full use of the possibilities allowed under MINUSTAH's mandate. Violence and weapons must not determine Haiti's political future.

On the political front, dialogue and national reconciliation must be continued so that everyone can express their choice on election day. Conditions must be established so that no party feels excluded from the process. All the political parties should take part in the reconciliation, on the condition, naturally, that they reject recourse to violence.

Secondly, reform of public institutions must continue. Reform of the judicial system, training Haiti's national police and promoting human rights must not wait for the elections to be carried out. Restructuring the judicial system and the police force is essential for establishing the rule of law in Haiti. It is also part of the groundwork in the fight against impunity. Let us be clear-sighted: a race against the clock is under way. A strong and sustainable democracy depends not only on credible elections but also on solid and sound institutions.

The third and last point is the establishment of a dynamic for economic development. An interim cooperation framework has been approved. The donors were all present in Washington in July, and then in December. But international support has not been sufficiently in evidence on the ground, in spite of the aid figures that were pledged.

Reconstruction projects must be implemented quickly and must offer the prospect of jobs for Haitians. The Haitian people expect tangible improvements in their daily lives — building roads, replanting trees, access for all to sanitation, clean drinking water and electricity. We need to demonstrate to the Haitian people the benefits of the transition to democracy. They must be given the means to take in hand the reconstruction of their own country. We are counting on the determination of Haiti's leaders. We must be able to count on the determination of the international community.

At this critical juncture we must not fail in our duty of solidarity vis-à-vis the Haitian people, nor disappoint them in the hope for a better future that emerged nearly a year ago. France, with its European Union partners, together with the United Nations and in multilateral forums, will continue to play its full part in supporting the efforts of the Haitian people to set their country on track to recovery. It will remain engaged in MINUSTAH and will continue to place its bilateral action in the interim cooperation framework, focusing on both institutional reconstruction and on strengthening basic services.

It is through comprehensive, coordinated action that we will meet the challenge of attaining peace.

With the tsunami tragedy in Asia, we saw an extraordinary outpouring of solidarity, reflecting a globalization of feelings. Our international engagement does not merely ebb and flow with images of disaster:

our commitment is made over the long term, wherever needs remain pressing. And that is the case of Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): To optimize the use of our time, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table or invite them to resume their seats at the side of the Chamber. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

The next speaker is the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States, His Excellency Mr. Luigi R. Einaudi, on whom I now call.

Mr. Einaudi (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, and, through you, the Argentine Republic for having convened this meeting and for having shouldered leadership responsibilities including that of hosting next November's Summit of the Americas.

(*spoke in English*)

Haiti is a founding member of the Organization of American States (OAS), and the organization has been particularly active in Haiti over the past 15 years. Yesterday we had the honour of receiving Juan Gabriel Valdés in our Permanent Council, and we had one of the best discussions of the situation in Haiti and of the needs facing the country with regard to the holding of good elections.

To represent the Permanent Council, I am accompanied today by its Vice-Chairman, Joshua Sears. I wish simply to say that we are very pleased to be able to be here.

Our most recent mandate from our own General Assembly refers to support for the elections, for the institutional strengthening of the Haitian State and for the defence of human rights, all in cooperation with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations as a whole. In fact, in the first days of November, Under-Secretary-General Prendergast and I were able to sign a memorandum of understanding which gave the OAS the lead in the voter registration process. I am very pleased to say that we have received a transfer of $8.7 million from the Government of the United States — to which I convey my thanks — for the undertaking of that work.

Let me make just a few very simple points. The first one is that good elections — that is to say, open, participative, non-exclusive elections in which the people can vote and have their votes counted and respected — are central to democratic stability and legitimacy in Haiti. I think there is absolutely no doubt of that among any of us.

The second is that that will not be easy to achieve. There are specific obstacles when one starts trying to organize good elections. I will say that I personally have spent almost four years working with the Haitian Government to exactly those ends, and with the same, so to speak, preaching: that we need to include the opposition. Oppositions, at times, have changed; needs remain very similar. It is very clear that, if Haiti is to avoid going from crisis to crisis, it needs — and the international community needs — to develop a programme of broad support for State institutions.

In that sense, the effort that the OAS is undertaking in Haiti is, I think, an extremely interesting one. Our objective is to contribute to the institutional development of Haiti and to the credibility of democracy in Haiti. That means that we have developed as careful a programme of electoral registration as we could. We are still refining it, together with the electoral experts of MINUSTAH and with the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council. It is one that will draw on excellent knowledge from within the hemisphere.

It is interesting to note that five countries — Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay — have contributed, I believe, about 80 per cent of the personnel for the stabilization force. Well, I would say that there is something close to that — together with the support of the United States, Canada and Mexico and that of some smaller countries such as Panama and Paraguay — in the support for national electoral tribunals, with strong support, again, from Brazil, in the establishment of personnel, rules, relationships and abilities to bring the best technical capability to bear.

We have tried to develop a system, which will begin operating in March, that will not be sui generis and "floating in the air" but which will contribute to institutional development by being tied to, and facilitating, the development of the civil registry of Haiti, which is an important institution and an important need in all of our countries. Having the legal right of existence is the start of human rights and of the ability to advance. We would like to help contribute to

the inclusion of as many as possible of the 4.5 million Haitians whom we propose to register, in a way that ensures that their registration will not just serve for a one-time election, but will provide the beginning of that basis for life — to which, I think, we are all committed.

That will not be easy. There are problems of infrastructure, of security and of voter education that will need to be handled. Let me simply say that I think that this is a critical moment. Our technicians — the OAS technicians and the technicians of the United Nations working with Juan Gabriel Valdés — are looking at and scrubbing the numbers one more time in close cooperation with the Provisional Electoral Council of Haiti. I believe that the Member States of the United Nations, certainly the member States of the OAS, and our observers, which have been very generous with us, will be receiving further indications of the financial support necessary to make that process work effectively.

I believe the Haitian situation is a unique historical situation. I also think it is surprisingly representative of a phenomenon on the international scene in which we live. But it is very difficult for local authorities to do things well in a globalized world without international support, and it is very difficult for the international community to achieve things if it is not capable of enlisting the support of the local authorities. As Minister Amorim said, the needs are long-term, but I think the challenge of legitimizing the political situation and increasing the confidence of Haitians and of the international community is a very immediate challenge.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States for the kind words he addressed to my country.

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ignacio Walker, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Walker (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We particularly thank the Argentine Republic for the timely convening of this open debate on Haiti. Likewise, we congratulate its Minister for Foreign Affairs, our dear friend Rafael Bielsa, on that important initiative and wish him every success in the presidency of the Security Council. We also want to thank Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, for the comprehensive report he provided us this morning. In addition, we welcome the presence of Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), and commend him for the presentation we just heard.

Undoubtedly, this is an excellent opportunity to renew the international community's commitment to ensuring the success of the peace mission in Haiti and to assessing the efforts already undertaken, so that we do not repeat the errors of the past. This time, the United Nations must not fail in Haiti. We must establish clear political objectives and accelerate institutional and economic rehabilitation as a fundamental condition for the restoration of sustainable stability in this brotherly State.

As members are aware, Chile, mindful that it was imperative to prevent a humanitarian emergency in Haiti, participated very early on in the Multinational Interim Force and immediately joined MINUSTAH. We did so and are doing so in the understanding that only a comprehensive, multidimensional and long-term peace operation will make possible the political, economic and social rehabilitation of the country. Latin America's significant participation in MINUSTAH attests to a collective political will to help resolve the problems of our region in the context of maintaining international peace and security, as we reaffirmed at the most recent meeting of the Rio Group, on 5 November.

During our tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we stressed the fundamental principles that we believe should govern the political transition in Haiti: convening a broad-based national dialogue, without any exclusion, that will promote national reconciliation; holding transparent and free elections in 2005, with international supervision; full respect for human rights; observance of the norms of due process; disarming paramilitary groups; and putting an end to impunity.

Although progress in creating a climate of security has been relatively slow — particularly in the beginning, as a result of the difficulties in bringing the MINUSTAH contingent up to full strength — we now note with satisfaction that there has been substantive progress in that area in the past two months, which was made clear in the Special Representative's

comprehensive briefing this morning. That has made it possible to carry out joint operations that have included United Nations military and police forces in coordination with the inadequate local police forces. In that context, we believe it is essential to rebuild and strengthen the Haitian police as a professional and depoliticized institution that proves itself worthy of the people's trust by operating with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Another important aspect of achieving social peace has been the search for an effective response to the social demands of members of the disbanded armed forces. Their reintegration into the work force is an issue that requires priority attention in the context of an effective commitment to the rule of law and a clear, categorical rejection of violence.

Just as reintegration is an imperative task, it is essential that it be accompanied by a process of disarmament not only of former soldiers, but of Haitian society as a whole. That is a basic prerequisite for restoring confidence.

We also believe that, without a political process that brings together all sectors of Haitian society to reach a governance pact, it will not be possible to achieve sustainable peace and security. That is why we have always stressed the urgent need to generate a dialogue among all the relevant political forces — including the Fanmi Lavalas party — so as to achieve a basic consensus. Only then can there be legitimate elections in Haiti to elect its new authorities. We recognize that that is a matter for Haitians to decide. MINUSTAH and OAS will provide technical support and act as facilitators to create substantive security conditions that will make it possible to hold free, secret and informed elections. We reiterate our appeal to the Transitional Government of Haiti to take all necessary steps to ensure the normal development of this political and electoral process.

In the past 11 years, the international community's efforts in Haiti have led to ephemeral successes, which has obliged us to take up the task again and again. Therefore, we believe that, together with the Haitian society and Government, we should address the causes of those repeated failures. In that connection, we believe that the strengthening of State institutions is the foundation for a national reconciliation and reconstruction process.

When we say "no more impunity", that must be supported by a strengthened and reformed judicial and prison system. When we reject violence, we must develop institutions that can effectively restrain it. When we speak of national reconciliation, we need to strengthen political parties and civil society organizations that will serve as tools for channelling the people's demands through a democratic system.

No political process will seem credible to a population that is malnourished and wracked by abject poverty and chronic unemployment. It is, therefore, of capital importance to design short- and long-term development projects that will help to objectively improve the living conditions of the Haitian people. We must begin with basic, specific projects that will be valued by the people and that will promote a positive perception of the international community's action in Haiti. In that connection, we want to reiterate very strongly, in this forum, our appeal to donor countries and the international financial organizations to release, without delay and with greater flexibility and urgency, the resources pledged to Haiti at the Washington donor conference held in July 2004. Perhaps we must communicate, in this forum, at this meeting, our sense of urgency with regard to those financial resources.

Chile and Ecuador have sent a contingent of engineers to carry out road infrastructure projects. We are facing a paradoxical situation, because we have qualified personnel and adequate machinery, but we are having serious difficulties in finding the financial resources and procuring the basic supplies needed to implement specific projects. That has caused the venture to focus on secondary tasks, which is surely also happening with other cooperation projects.

As a Government, we have invested $20 million in equipping that engineering corps and in military equipment, but at present we are carrying out only a $100,000 project. Resources and capacities are available, but they are underutilized because of a lack of financial resources. It is necessary further to clarify the priorities set out in the interim cooperation framework and to establish expedited processes to enable international organizations and donors to contribute to MINUSTAH. We therefore urge the Transitional Government to continue to work on specific economic development projects, with emphasis on the provision of basic services. From that perspective, we deem it of the greatest importance that MINUSTAH have the capacity to administer quick-impact projects.

Finally, I should like to reiterate our willingness to help ensure that the rehabilitation of Haiti, to which we all are committed, facilitates the functioning of solid and effective democratic institutions in a context of economic development and social equity. We must be clear, at the level of the United Nations and at that of the financial institutions, that this is a fundamental political objective to which our actions and projects must be geared.

To the extent that we all can, in accordance with our respective capacities to cooperate in carrying out that task, we will be working for a lasting peace and stability. That will require a sustained effort over time as well as perseverance in our actions. We cannot allow a recurrence of the cycle of crisis and indifference that has characterized the relationship of the international community to Haiti throughout history.

We invite the Council to adopt a forward-looking approach, because only in that way can we can help to ensure that the Haitian people can once again aspire to a future of democracy and dignity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Minister Ignacio Walker for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Carlos Morales Troncoso.

Mr. Morales Troncoso (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your presiding over the Council this month, and I should like also to thank your country for the welcome initiative to convene this special meeting on a topic of such great importance to our region.

Today I have the honour of addressing the Security Council to convey my Government's position on the situation in Haiti — a nation with which my country, the Dominican Republic, shares the territory of the island of Hispaniola.

The historical, geographic, political and social relationship between the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti is a source of mandatory solidarity between our peoples. As a result, the Dominican people are not indifferent to the poverty and despair or to the recurring episodes of violence that have so deeply affected the well-being of the people of Haiti and threatened the viability of the Haitian State. We are convinced that it is urgent — and I emphasize "urgent" — that we adopt effective measures to arrest the accelerated process of disintegration that seems to afflict Haitian society.

In Haiti, which is characterized by a context of extreme and generalized poverty and an atmosphere of violence and intransigence, the Government has been unable to cope with the most urgent problems facing the population or — as aptly noted earlier by Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés — to deal with the dysfunctions in the legal system, Parliament and the security forces.

We must help our sister republic of Haiti. We must make every effort to restore the rule of law and to develop and strengthen institutions and electoral processes — as was so rightly pointed out this morning, particularly by the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States — and we also have to create the foundations for good governance and improve the general standard of living.

We have come here, Sir, in response to your kind invitation in order clearly to express our solidarity with the other nations of Latin American and Caribbean and with the efforts of the Security Council, which, even as we speak, are together firmly committing themselves to cooperate with efforts to stabilize Haiti in order to guarantee the restoration and preservation of its institutions.

Our foreign policy has consistently expressed its solidarity with Haiti and called for generous international assistance to help its people, crushed as they are by poverty and requiring all types of humanitarian assistance on an emergency basis.

In keeping with that position, our Government has taken action at the national and international levels aimed at preventing the gradual fragmentation of Haitian society, in hopes of promoting and strengthening tolerance and solidarity among the main actors in public life in that country.

The main guidelines of our initiative are to directly or indirectly contact and persuade the leaders of the various sectors of Haitian society to reconcile their differences, to promote reciprocal respect, and to coordinate activities that will sow the seeds for the future and that will serve as an example to promote national unity and integrity.

The Dominican Government is convinced that this type of institutional initiative — at both the public

and private levels — will motivate and convince those Haitian leaders who have the capacity to influence others and help them change the opinions of those who are currently acting in an isolated and bellicose manner.

The overarching commitment of the international community towards Haiti must be aimed at achieving the reconciliation of the various elements of Haitian society, so that its leaders can move from confrontation to cooperation and begin the economic reconstruction of the country, in order to relieve the crushing poverty of its people — an extreme example of survival in a context of far-reaching and longstanding social injustice on a territory experiencing an advanced degree of erosion and desertification.

To achieve those lofty goals, we need what we have consistently asked for and what all previous speakers have requested: a long-term commitment on the part of the international community to provide massive, sustained and timely assistance on the part of developed nations, as clearly underscored by Minister Celso Amorim of Brazil, as well as international solidarity that is strong enough to overcome Haiti's problems.

In that respect, as proposed by President Leonel Fernández, our country is planning a ministerial summit, to be held in Santo Domingo, aimed at strengthening the joint actions of donors and those countries participating in the peace mission to Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker is the Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, The Honourable Dame Billie Miller, to whom I give the floor.

Dame Billie Miller (Barbados): The Caribbean Community deeply appreciates this opportunity to address the Security Council on the situation in Haiti.

One year ago, we were all gravely concerned about deteriorating political and security conditions in Haiti. With Haitian agreement and international support, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) launched a diplomatic initiative. Underpinned by the principles of democracy and good governance enshrined in the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the CARICOM initiative sought the following: to stabilize the political situation through a power-sharing arrangement; to avoid the repetition of the traditional Haitian practice of getting rid of the President by any means in order to resolve political conflict; and to help the Haitians find a pacific and political solution that would preserve the rule of law and constitutional continuity.

Unfortunately, on 29 February 2004, the quick fix was in and principles thrown out. CARICOM heads of Government were disappointed by the reluctance of the Security Council to take immediate action in response to appeals for assistance from the Government of Haiti and to the request of the Caribbean Community. The elected President departed the country in circumstances still to be elucidated. An interim administration was subsequently put in place using some of the elements outlined in the CARICOM Prior Action Plan.

In the view of CARICOM, the fundamental tenets of democratic practice and behaviour have been compromised. We cannot vacillate on principles since they are essential to our security as small States. Continuing violations of the principles laid down in the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society have made it impossible for the Community to receive representatives of Haiti in its councils. The interim administration must be held to internationally recognized standards with regard to respect for fundamental civil and political rights, due process and the rule of law. Allegations of egregious abuses at the hands of the police must be fully investigated. The prolonged detention of Fanmi Lavalas leaders and activists without trial or charges can only be construed as arbitrary detention on the basis of political affiliation. Such persons should be released forthwith. That serious breach of fundamental rights is exacerbated by a persistent failure to prosecute the rebels for their criminal activity. Such an approach also hinders the establishment of an enabling political climate, without which peace and security cannot be sustained.

CARICOM remains committed to the people of Haiti. To that end, the Caribbean Community has put in place mechanisms such as an assistance programme, of which electoral support is a key component.

Now, one year later, the deep concerns of the regional and international communities have increased. We have been hearing references to that this morning. The inability of the interim administration to promote

stability and political inclusiveness has been a stumbling block to progress. Insecurity and volatility persist. The lot of ordinary Haitians has not improved. The traditional clamour for a change in government is once again being raised. Hopelessness and joblessness combine with the easy availability of weapons to fill the ranks of the illegally armed groups that proliferate on both sides of the divide. Their activities, whether criminal or political in intent, subvert the authority of the State and must be curtailed. Instability has an adverse effect on Haiti's neighbours as well, including the Bahamas and Jamaica, as it spurs illegal immigration and, increasingly, trafficking in small arms and drugs.

The November report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAN) (S/2004/908) rightly underlines the need for increasing the capacity of the Stabilization Mission to implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. That must be a priority. Those who foment and engage in violence must be prosecuted.

The disbursement of donor pledges is urgently required to help alleviate the desperate social and economic situation. It is to be hoped that the recent release of funds by the World Bank will be replicated by other major donors. Coherence and mutual reinforcement among the humanitarian, security, political and developmental strategies must also be ensured. Those strategies must also be informed by the harsh realities of the Haitian environment.

Free and fair elections are pivotal to returning to constitutional rule. They are, however, only a critical way station on the long and arduous road to stability, recovery and a viable democracy. It is clear that the daunting prerequisites for credible elections later this year are not yet entirely within grasp. Our joint and urgent task must be to help create a secure environment that permits open campaigning; to help ensure a political climate that facilitates the participation of all political groups that reject violence, including those currently outside the political and electoral process; and to help establish an effective administrative structure to conduct proper elections.

As the difficulties of the transition process mount, the concepts of national dialogue and bridge-building are being increasingly advocated from within Haiti. Domestic attempts to make the idea of bringing together a representative cross-section of Haitian society a reality must be encouraged. In that connection, the Caribbean Community commends the exploratory efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Defusing tensions, identifying common and unifying interests, promoting inclusiveness and building confidence are urgently required societal building blocks. They could facilitate a way forward on sensitive and contentious issues such as security, disarmament, development paths and priorities and elections. But ultimately, responsibility for creating favourable conditions for reconciliation, recovery and stability lies with the citizens of Haiti themselves.

The building of democracy in Haiti and the creation of a stable political, social and economic order require the long-term commitment of the Haitians and their partners in the international community. The Caribbean Community salutes the key role played by Latin American States within MINUSTAH, as well as by the other contributing States. It also recognizes the supportive efforts of the Organization of American States. As circumstances permit, CARICOM makes its own contribution to the stabilization and rebuilding efforts of the United Nations in the sister country of Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs of the United States, His Excellency Mr. Roger Noriega, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Noriega (United States of America): The United States appreciates Argentina's initiative to focus the Council's attention on Haiti. The United States stands committed to our collective effort to improve stability, strengthen the rule of law, consolidate representative democracy through elections and lay the foundation for long-term economic recovery and growth in Haiti. The international community has responded to the crisis in Haiti with a coordinated effort to establish security and promote political reconciliation. I wish to highlight the contributions of Brazil, Argentina and other western hemisphere countries to this important and worthy effort.

As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) approaches its fully authorized strength, it has demonstrated that it has the will and the wherewithal to improve the security conditions of the Haitian people, consistent with its mandate. Since it

intensified such operations in December to confront gang activities and to defend the rule of law in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, MINUSTAH has made significant, important progress in augmenting security in the Haitian capital's most impoverished neighbourhoods.

We call upon the international community and the interim Government to work in concert on a comprehensive programme to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate into productive society all irregular forces and irregular armed groups in Haiti. Also, we encourage the international community and the interim Government to focus on building an effective civilian police force to improve security and to protect the rights, lives and property of all Haitians.

Security and development are inseparable. The improved security climate offers the opportunity to deliver on our collective commitment to helping to bring real political and economic recovery and growth to Haiti. At the World Bank donor's conference last July in Washington, D.C., the international community pledged more than $1 billion to help Haiti. The United States is delivering on its commitment to Haiti, spending over $113 million on economic development, health care, jobs and disaster relief in 2004, which accounts for approximately half of the international community's donations to Haiti for that year. We expect to spend well over $150 million in Haiti during the course of this year.

It is important to remember that pledges alone will not improve Haiti's conditions. We must work to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles in each of our Governments and institutions to disburse the funds that we pledged at last year's conference. Haitian authorities should redouble their efforts to identify concrete projects and to accept appropriate technical advisors and support to implement those programmes in an urgent fashion. Similarly, we call upon donors to intensify their efforts to remove any bureaucratic hurdles to projects that would improve the lot of average Haitians today and give them precious hope for the future.

We support efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MINUSTAH, consistent with the mandate provided in Security Council resolutions 1542 (2004) and 1576 (2004), to join with other United Nations organs, the international financial institutions and Member States to assist the interim Government of Haiti in designing and implementing those urgent, high-impact projects for the recovery and development of Haiti.

During his visit to Haiti last month, Secretary of State Colin Powell consulted with Haitian authorities and representatives of civil society about the need for a broad national dialogue in Haiti. We believe that any party in Haiti that accepts democratic principles and rejects the path of violence should have a place at the table in such a dialogue. We commend MINUSTAH's efforts in support of that process.

Such a dialogue represents an important step towards inclusive, free and fair elections this fall and national reconciliation in the long run. My Government is pleased to support the work of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations in helping Haiti to prepare for those elections. The United States has contributed some $9 million to that effort through the OAS and another $1.25 million through our bilateral assistance programmes. We understand that the election effort will require substantial additional funds for voter education, infrastructure improvements and security. To ensure successful elections, we strongly encourage donors to give generously to that effort.

In conclusion, those of us who are fortunate enough to have persons of Haitian origin in our communities know them to be extraordinarily talented and industrious. For that reason, if we meet our commitment to working together to strengthen a Government that empowers and protects all citizens of Haiti, there is good reason to be hopeful about Haiti's future.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom very much appreciates your presence in the Chair, Sir, and the contributions already made in this debate.

I should like to associate myself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

We all owe a debt to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for the work that has been done under difficult conditions, including limited personnel and the devastation caused by tropical storm Jeanne. I would like to express our particular thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Juan

Gabriel Valdés for his contribution, to the Brazilian force commander, to the Canadian police commissioner and to all troop-contributing countries.

The debate has focused on three priority issues, and they are the obvious ones for a post-conflict State. First is the need for a political evolution towards a democratic end State and for elections, which Minister Miller described as a critical way station on the path to democracy. Secondly, there is the need to create a secure State in which, eventually, the responsibility for law and order will rest with the Haitians. Thirdly, there is the need for economic development, which must go hand in hand with the others in order to improve the living conditions of the people of Haiti. Those three objectives require a coordinated delivery of services by the United Nations and its agencies on the ground in the country, reinforced by the neighbours, the regional organizations and bilateral donors.

The United Kingdom fully supports the Transitional Government. It is important that all necessary effort be made to move towards a lasting, secure and stable environment in Haiti. In order to achieve that, it is essential that all democratic elements in the country have the opportunity to participate in the transitional process and the elections, including those members of the Lavalas party who have renounced violence.

The United Kingdom Government remains concerned by the human rights situation in Haiti. It is essential that those individuals who are and have been involved in human rights violations not have any place within the Government or associated bodies. Establishing an effective and respected Haitian National Police force, the officers of which are subject to thorough vetting, will be an important step towards improving that human rights record.

On security, as others have said, further steps are needed, especially on disarmament, demobilization and — the key element — the reintegration process. Disarming the gangs that operate throughout much of Haiti is crucial for the creation of a stable future.

Through the United Kingdom Department for International Development, we are financing development activities in Haiti and, of course, we support Haiti through the European Union and World Bank programmes. The long-term commitment of us all to Haiti is essential for a successful future, and in that regard we particularly welcome the assistance of the regional organizations and the cooperation of neighbouring countries, as we have heard today.

If I may, however, I should like to end by saying that Haiti should serve as a potent and salutary example to us. Its problems in the 1990s necessitated a major United Nations operation, but we did not stay long enough to achieve durable success. This time, the United Nations and the international community need to stay the course. But more generally, the United Nations and the Security Council need better to address impending threats before they become a reality in individual countries. We need to give a higher profile to the work on conflict prevention and to support those countries at real risk of instability. Hence, the importance for all of us of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, with its proposal for a more a coherent approach by the entire United Nations family to the range of issues which actually comprise the conflict spectrum. I very much hope that that work, too — like progress on Haiti — can develop in 2005.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): It is a privilege to see the Foreign Minister of Argentina playing such an important role in the preparation, convening and conduct of this important meeting of the Security Council. We are honoured by the presence of the Foreign Minister of Haiti, of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, the acting Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of those members of the Council and countries from the region with ministerial representation today.

The initiative of the Argentine presidency of the Security Council to organize this open debate is welcome and timely. Haiti is a test case for the United Nations, and for the Council in particular. What it comes down to is our very ability to sustain or foster a long-term, multidimensional, integrated investment in durably addressing the political, security and economic challenges of complex post-conflict situations. Romania has always believed in encouraging involvement and participation in such tasks on the part of regional and subregional institutions, while carrying out an ongoing dialogue with the Council and the United Nations. That has also been echoed in the relevant findings and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Romania aligns itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of

Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore try to be brief and specific in my remarks.

First, I would like to join other speakers in supporting the fundamental vision on which our debate today is predicated, namely, that of a close interrelationship between security, political institutionalization and economic development in Haiti. The stabilization and development of Haiti are not easy tasks, but they are within reach, provided that consistent and coordinated efforts are resolutely undertaken in all three areas I have just mentioned.

Like others, we believe that improving security in Haiti remains one of the core issues, as it is a pre-condition for the achievement of a wide range of objectives being pursued in Haiti — such as the creation of an environment conducive to democratic elections, the consolidation of State institutions, the fostering of national dialogue and improving the economic situation. The persistent violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups constitutes an extremely worrying sign of the many dangers that continue to threaten this severely tested country. Such violence can undermine ongoing stabilization efforts and disrupt the transition process. We support the efforts of the Transitional Government to curb violence while observing universally recognized human rights and the standards of the rule of law.

The role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in upholding Government efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation in the country remains decisive. We commend troop-contributing countries for their investment in that operation. They did deliver on their commitment to deploy the Mission in a timely manner throughout Haiti's regions.

We are encouraged by the recent large-scale joint operation conducted by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police in the troubled districts of Port-au-Prince. Further action of that kind is still needed as a matter of urgency to continue to redress the current security situation.

Romania also acknowledges the difference that an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme would make to the overall improvement of the security picture. That is the reason for our call for the establishment without further delay of a national commission responsible for carrying out a comprehensive, country-wide DDR programme.

On the political front, we are encouraged by the commitment of the Transitional Government to organize elections in 2005 and to ensure the subsequent transfer of power by February 2006. The decisions of the Provisional Electoral Council regarding the timing and budget for elections should lead to greater clarity with regard to the schedule for the transitional period and the needs associated with international assistance for elections. In that regard, Romania welcomes the signing on 10 January of the global accord on an important assistance project for elections by the Government of Haiti, MINUSTAH, the United Nations Development Programme and the Provisional Electoral Council. The assistance pledged on that occasion aimed at covering the most immediate aspects of the elections is new evidence of a strong international commitment to the holding of free and fair elections. It also attests to the good cooperation prevailing among international and local partners in Haiti. We look forward to an inclusive political process, without which — as rightly asserted in the latest report of the Secretary-General — no sustainable peace and security can be achieved.

As always, Romania attaches great importance to combating impunity and to the due observance of human rights by all parties. Arbitrary detentions should stop without delay. The Transitional Government must release those against whom no charges have yet been brought, and bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations. Accordingly, reforming the judiciary has to be a high priority in Haiti.

As a country that promotes cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, Romania remains supportive of enhanced involvement on the part of regional organizations in efforts aimed at stabilization and development in Haiti. The streamlined working relationship between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) in Haiti once again demonstrates the political weight and effective impact of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes, which is a theme that Romania is attempting to pursue in the course of its mandate as an elected member of the Council.

The stabilization and development of Haiti was strengthened with the recent establishment of the Core Group on Haiti. A positive development has been the use of the cooperation architecture employed there in the area of electoral assistance. We also welcome the

recent signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and OAS on coordination of electoral assistance to Haiti, as well as the indications of increased cooperation between MINUSTAH and the International Organization of la Francophonie and other relevant organizations and partners involved in the electoral process.

In fostering functioning democracy in Haiti, it is of the utmost importance that development projects are launched and implemented with the help of the United Nations, international financial institutions and Member States. Such projects have to be "quick starters" and have an immediate impact on the living conditions of the population, for there can hardly be democracy in a country where the basic needs of the population are not fully provided for. Accordingly, we agree with the need to establish a long-term development strategy for Haiti with the assistance of the international community, as reflected in the interim cooperation framework. We also welcome the recent decision by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to provide emergency assistance for Haiti's recovery in support of the Government's efforts to deliver urgently needed basic services to the population.

Finally, I would like to conclude by restating our conviction that the structural instability in Haiti requires a long-term commitment and a multidimensional approach that is based on the lessons learned from the past and on addressing the core causes of instability, including the economic and social dimensions. The efforts of the Transitional Government, the meaningful and effective involvement of the United Nations through MINUSTAH and a wide range of other bodies of the United Nations system, and the impressive regional cooperation developed in support of Haiti are important steps towards moving further towards the day when Haiti regains its rightful place among the stable, prosperous and democratic States of the world. The proposed mission of the Security Council to Haiti — possibly in conjunction with a similar mission by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti — would also be a step in that direction.

Lastly, allow me to restate what I said in the beginning, namely, that we feel very privileged to have you, Mr. President, preside over this important meeting of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I would first like to welcome your presence, Mr. President, at this debate and to congratulate you on your assumption of your duties as President for the month of January. I wish you every success in your tenure. In that regard, I would also like to congratulate you for your innovative choice of this particular item for an open debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Foreign Minister of Haiti to our deliberations, as well as to say that I look forward to a fruitful discussion and conclusion of our meeting today.

Greece fully associates itself with the statement to be made later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

On the surface, it would appear that there is not much that links Greece and Haiti together; one would be forgiven for thinking that the two countries are worlds apart. However, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that Haiti was the first country to recognize the Greek revolution and the creation of the modern Greek State nearly two centuries ago — something which the Greek people remember to this day. It is only fitting, therefore, that the very first day of Greece's membership of the Security Council — 1 January — coincided with Haiti's national day, and that Greece is addressing the Security Council at a public meeting, for the first time as a non-permanent member, on the situation in Haiti.

Haiti has been through much in recent years and has endured a great deal of suffering, not least as a result of the natural disasters that have hit the island. The international community has shown — and I believe it will continue to show — support for the Haitian people so that they may realize their aspirations in a secure and stable environment.

The Greek Government expresses its support for the efforts of the Transitional Government in supporting the political process of national dialogue and reconciliation. It is important that this dialogue continue unhindered, with the participation of all sides, so that a substantial proportion of the electorate can participate in the forthcoming local, legislative and presidential elections.

The priority should be to improve the security situation on the ground. That will not only have beneficial results with respect to the disbursement of economic assistance, but also pave the way for long-term development, which is currently facing obstacles, and help to minimize human rights violations. A positive step towards improving the security situation would be a more vigorous approach on the part of the Transitional Government of Haiti in pursuing the goals of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and in setting up the relevant national commission without further delay. The melange of criminal gangs, local militias and disbanded army and other groups still rampaging through the streets of Haiti must come to an end. We encourage the Transitional Government to promote the rule of law and good governance, as well as to put an end to impunity. We also believe that Haiti's constitution must be respected and preserved.

It is imperative that the United Nations stand firmly by Haiti's side in the crucial months ahead so as to ensure that a credible and viable process of political and economic rehabilitation is put in place, starting with the installation of a democratic Government elected after fair and free elections.

Long-term involvement is also essential for the success of United Nations efforts in the country and, in that regard, Greece welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Haiti, Ambassador Valdés. I thank him for the clarity of his briefing this morning.

Greece also extends its appreciation to the countries participating in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and notes with satisfaction that both the military and the civilian police components have already reached their full strength. MINUSTAH should now be in a better position to implement its mandate. Our appreciation is also extended to each and every individual participating in the Mission. We utterly condemn all attacks against MINUSTAH and other international personnel, especially those carrying out humanitarian tasks.

The long-term prosperity of Haiti cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of human suffering in the country. Poverty continues to plague the great majority of the population, and the only way to reverse the situation is by promoting long-term economic development. In that regard, Greece welcomes the reactivation of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. Likewise, we welcome the creation of the Core Group. We also thank the Organization of American States for its involvement, especially in the field of voter registration.

In the same context, we are encouraged to see that the donors conference, which took place in Washington in July 2004, has so far generated over $1 billion in reconstruction aid.

Greece is doing its part within the European Union context. In addition, Greece has recently pledged bilateral assistance to Haiti in an effort to help the country face its most immediate needs.

Nevertheless, it will be even more encouraging to see the timely disbursement of donor funds to a people much in need. We therefore call upon those involved — the donors, the international financial institutions and the Transitional Government — to put forward, as soon as possible, plans for specific projects that will benefit from the donors' generous contributions.

In closing, I would like to assure the Foreign Minister of Haiti that Greece stands ready to assist Haiti on its path to stability and normalcy, both on a bilateral level and through multilateral forums, such as the United Nations and the European Union.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Greece for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I should like first of all to say that, as one of the new elected members of the Security Council, which include Argentina, Japan looks forward to working closely with the delegation of Argentina, as well as with other members of the Council, in the coming months. I should also like to say that my delegation feels privileged to see the Foreign Minister of Argentina presiding over today's meeting.

We commend the strong commitment and the active and ceaseless efforts of the countries of Latin America and the Organization of American States in taking the lead to deal with the situation in Haiti, which is on our agenda today. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Valdés, for his comprehensive and enlightening briefing. We commend the efforts of Ambassador Valdés and his team in the multifaceted United Nations

Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for securing safety, promoting stability and undertaking many activities in a variety of areas, including humanitarian and electoral support, development aid, civil affairs and others. I also pay respect to all the countries concerned, especially the Latin American countries, which have contributed significantly to the Mission in Haiti by providing personnel, technical expertise and financial resources, as well as political and moral support.

Haiti presents yet another example of a country where the fundamental issue of the interlinkage between development and peace arises. A combination of widespread poverty and joblessness in society, disease, weak or failing governance and institutions, social injustice, corruption and so forth, and the resultant sense of frustration, anger and despair among the population constitute a certain prescription for tension in society and political instability, which can eventually blow up in one form or another. Sometimes the situation is made worse, as we have seen in many other countries throughout the world, by natural disasters of one kind or another — earthquakes, drought, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis — that expose and accentuate vulnerabilities and cause what would otherwise be avoidable damage, suffering and misery. International sympathy and assistance are needed in many of these cases, and needed in time — not after the blowout. Prevention is wiser than cure, and it is less painful and often less costly.

I had an opportunity to pay a visit to Haiti in mid-2003, when I was still in the service of the humanitarian arm of the United Nations. By early 2003, it was already recognized in the international aid community in Haiti that the situation in the country might be quickly reaching an extremely dangerous stage.

Unfortunately, early warnings of possible impending crisis went largely unheeded by the United Nations and the international donor community, and little concrete action was taken until the crisis had materialized. Haiti should serve as yet another good lesson for the future more generally as we ask some relevant questions: How do we set up a more effective early-warning mechanism as part of the efforts aimed at conflict prevention and at the prevention of a recurrence of crisis? What sort of preventive measures can be realistically taken by the international community in general and by the United Nations in particular? How can we best organize ourselves to undertake such activities? The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change commissioned by the Secretary-General (A/59/565) offers some clues and ideas that the Organization will soon address in a serious way. We hope that important steps forward will be taken as a result.

That being said, we welcome the efforts of the Transitional Government of Haiti to stabilize its political situation with the support of the international community. Japan would also like to commend the proactive steps taken by MINUSTAH and the Transitional Government of Haiti, particularly to improve the security situation, including their recent joint operations in Port-au-Prince and in other areas, and we expect that such initiatives will continue.

Progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is manifestly important, not least for the success of the forthcoming national and local elections. Although we welcome the statement of Prime Minister Latortue to move on that issue, we would like to call upon the Transitional Government to make strong efforts to be proactive in that area, making use of the support of MINUSTAH.

It is of great importance that the Haitian people take steps towards promoting a process of meaningful national dialogue, with a full sense of ownership, to create a more stable political environment. The Transitional Government is expected to continue to call for national reconciliation and to promote quick-impact projects. For the medium to long term, political and economic restructuring and corruption-prevention measures, as well as development policy measures that contribute to the improvement of people's lives, should be vigorously pursued. That will be the surest path for the Government to follow to gain the broad support of the people.

From that point of view, the support of the Special Representative and of MINUSTAH is critically important; we call for their active initiative in this matter. At the same time, we remain concerned about the arbitrary detention of people solely on the grounds of their political affiliation, as the report of the Secretary-General points out. We believe that that is neither advisable nor condonable, as such action will not serve to facilitate the national dialogue and is in direct contravention of fundamental human rights principles.

The consolidation of peace in Haiti requires not only national dialogue, but also an improved humanitarian and economic environment. For the success of the elections scheduled for November, prompt disbursement of the funds pledged at the international donor conference on Haiti held last July is also essential. All three of the projects in the areas of health, food and agriculture pledged by Japan have already been implemented. To date, the total assistance extended by Japan to Haiti in the form of development aid, technical assistance and emergency relief amounts to more than $160 million. The international community may rest assured that Japan will never falter in its efforts to help Haiti and its people.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the initiative of Argentina to organize this special debate on Haiti and also welcomes Argentina's commitment to Haiti, which is demonstrated, Mr. Minister, by your presence among us today. We thank Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative report. We would also like to thank the Foreign Ministers of Haiti, Barbados, Brazil, Chile and the Dominican Republic; the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of France; the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs of the United States; and the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) for their statements and for the committed involvement and contribution of their respective countries and organizations in finding a solution to the problems in Haiti.

The situation in Haiti is a source of great concern. The disregard for the rule of law, the worsening security situation, the abuse of human rights, the violence against women and children, the arbitrary arrests and the threats and intimidation directed against human rights activists are of great concern to all of us. Tanzania commends the efforts of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and of the Haitian police in countering the spread of violence under very trying circumstances. We welcome and encourage the efforts of the Transitional Government of Haiti to establish a national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as recommended by the Secretary-General, to facilitate the work of restoring order and curbing violence. That must be a priority, as armed former soldiers appear to be a major factor in the current insecurity.

The people of Haiti have also suffered from repeated natural disasters — the latest of which was the devastating tropical storm last September — which have crippled an already distressed socio-economic situation. We express our sympathy for the loss of lives and property and the destruction caused by those phenomena. We commend the Caribbean Community and other neighbours of Haiti that sent assistance, and all the United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations that took immediate steps to respond to the natural disasters.

We also commend those who pledged funding for relief following the Haitian floods appeal, as well as all those — including the international financial institutions — who had previously made pledges at the donor conference for the Interim Cooperation Framework. We believe that timely disbursement of the pledged funds will have a decisive impact on the rehabilitation work and the development efforts in Haiti. In that regard, we support the strengthening and realization of the three pillars of MINUSTAH and the establishment of a long-term development strategy for Haiti. It should be noted that the chronically depressed state of the economy and the abject poverty in Haiti, with the resulting widespread unemployment, greatly contribute to the prevailing insecurity in the country and need to be addressed affirmatively in the overall recovery strategy for Haiti.

Tanzania welcomes the commitment made by the Transitional Government to organize free, fair and credible elections. It is our hope that the elections will indeed be held in November and December 2005, as planned, as the culmination of an inclusive political process and a reconciliation that the Transitional Government should be preparing now. We therefore encourage the continuation of a national dialogue process among all political parties and civil society, and we urge them to participate in the coming elections. We recognize here the contribution of the OAS in preparing the voter registration, which is an important and necessary step in the holding of elections.

We also urge and encourage the full deployment of troops by contributing countries, police and other personnel to strengthen MINUSTAH's ability to face the challenges of re-establishing stability and to carry out its mandate as well as to build the capacity of the local institutions.

Finally, Tanzania hopes that, this time around, the United Nations and the international community as a whole will remain fully committed to Haiti well beyond this transitional process to consolidate the peace process through a comprehensive peace-building engagement. The proposed mission of the Security Council to Haiti will indeed sustain the focus and attention on Haiti.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. Foreign Minister, the Chinese delegation welcomes your presence here in the Security Council to preside over this important meeting. We welcome also the presence of Mr. Siméon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, and we wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Valdés for his briefing to the Council.

The presence of foreign ministers and high-level officials from many countries and that of the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) is a reflection of the international community's deep concern and firm commitment vis-à-vis Haiti as it moves towards peace and stability. We are deeply appreciative of that fact.

We are pleased to have witnessed some positive changes in the situation in Haiti recently. In the more than seven months since the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was first deployed, 90 per cent of the peacekeepers and 95 per cent of the police are already on the ground, successfully implementing the mandate entrusted to them by the Security Council. They have basically stabilized the security situation in Haiti.

Secondly, in the area of disarmament, the restoration of the rule of law and the promotion of national reconciliation, the Transitional Government of Haiti has successively adopted positive and proactive measures, which have already begun to take effect. The Transitional Government's unremitting efforts deserve full acknowledgement.

Thirdly, confidence in Haiti from all sides has been mounting and inputs have increased, resulting in favourable conditions for a comprehensive settlement of the question of Haiti. The World Bank's recent release of $73 million in assistance to Haiti in particular is an encouraging sign.

Considering the complex and difficult nature of the situation in Haiti, we believe that these achievements are indeed hard-won. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Transitional Government and the people of Haiti and to pay tribute to Mr. Valdés and to MINUSTAH for their tireless efforts.

Achieving national reconciliation, improving the security situation and promoting economic development are the three pillars of the settlement of the issue of Haiti and the basic guarantee for such a settlement. They must be given simultaneous attention. None should be emphasized to the detriment of another.

We hope that the Transitional Government will swiftly launch a national dialogue and reconciliation process, strive for consensus among all domestic parties and create a favourable environment for the successful holding of the election. We hope that it will speedily establish a national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and promote the collection of weapons from civilians in the context of the DDR programme, create more employment opportunities, effectively improve people's living conditions, and increase the population's confidence in the future of the nation.

At the same time, I wish to emphasize that the peace, stability and development of Haiti as a least developed country will not be possible without the vigorous support and assistance of the international community, including the United Nations, as well as the active support and participation of countries and organizations of the region.

In that connection, lessons should be drawn from the past. The attention given to Haiti and the inputs made must be kept up in a sustainable manner. We therefore are in favour of keeping the question of Haiti under constant consideration in the Security Council and believe that MINUSTAH's presence in Haiti must be considered on the basis of need. We support a continued major role by relevant departments of the United Nations, the OAS and other international agencies in the process of achieving peace and stability in Haiti. We appeal to donor countries and to the international financial institutions concerned to expeditiously deliver on their pledge commitments. We are in favour of the issuing of a presidential statement, as drafted by Argentina, following this debate.

Although there are no diplomatic relations between China and Haiti, the Chinese people have always had friendly feelings towards the Haitian

people and have been following developments in the situation in that country. We have already provided, and will continue to provide, assistance in good faith to the peace and stability process in Haiti. We are firmly convinced that the Haitian people, who, through their heroic struggles, were the first in Latin America to achieve independence, will certainly achieve durable peace and sustainable development with the assistance of the international community and through their own unremitting efforts.

Haiti, the pearl of the Antilles, will without a doubt overcome its difficult circumstances and shine in all its gleaming splendour.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We are honoured that you, Sir, the Foreign Minister of Argentina, are presiding over this important meeting on Haiti. We also welcome and thank the Foreign Minister of Haiti for his statement. We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, and the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States for their informative presentations.

Next month will mark the first year of the re-engagement of the United Nations in Haiti. The international community's response — initially through the multinational interim force and now through MINUSTAH — has prevented Haiti from sliding further into instability, which would have adversely affected the region.

MINUSTAH is now close to its authorized military and civilian levels, tasked with law enforcement and other related responsibilities. Filipino military and civilian police forces are now part of MINUSTAH. The Philippines is encouraged to note that MINUSTAH now has a credible military and police presence to allow it to respond more effectively to threats to the country's stability.

The improved law and order situation is expected to pave the way for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, with the help of the international community. It is gratifying to note that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have approved loan packages for economic governance and emergency recovery and disaster management.

The task ahead for MINUSTAH is not going to be easy. The immediate challenge for the Mission is how to address the reported climate of fear prevailing in Haiti and create a safe and secure environment that will allow the Haitian people to resume their normal way of life. That will involve countering the continuing threat posed by the armed gangs and dissident former soldiers who have recently threatened to wage guerrilla warfare against the Transitional Government.

The second challenge is for the Transitional Government to take concrete steps towards the establishment of a national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. MINUSTAH and the Haitian authorities should explore more creative ways to entice those former soldiers and gang members to turn in their weapons in exchange for, among other things, compensation or livelihood opportunities.

We are pleased to note that initial steps have already been taken in that direction. We welcome the steps taken by the Transitional Government to look into the valid demands of demobilized soldiers. The greatest weapons to meet the challenges are hope and commitment.

We hope to see Haiti's transitional leaders exercise a greater degree of flexibility and tolerance and exert greater efforts to persuade those who remain outside the political process to renounce violence and take part in rebuilding their nation. We welcome the release of Fanmi Lavalas leaders as a positive step towards national reconciliation.

We hope to see the Haitian authorities place greater emphasis on human rights and put an end to impunity. We hope that the Transitional Government will end the reported illegal and arbitrary arrests and detentions, summary executions of human rights activists and acts of sexual violence against women and that those responsible for those acts will be held accountable.

We hope to see the transformation of the Haiti National Police into a professional police organization that respects human rights and adheres to international norms and standards.

We hope to see the redemption of the pledges made during the international donors conference six months ago to support the Transitional Government in preparing and implementing development projects that are vital to the stabilization process. We also look forward to the establishment of a long-term development strategy for Haiti in accordance with the

priorities underlined in the interim cooperation framework.

We hope to see the people of Haiti go to the polls in November to freely elect their new leaders. In that regard, we welcome the preparations being undertaken by the Transitional Government and the Provisional Electoral Council to ensure the holding of free, inclusive and peaceful elections in November. We also welcome the global agreement, recently initialled in the office of Prime Minister Gérard Latortue, which will bring $41 million from Canada, the European Union and the United States to Haiti for its elections later this year.

We hope that the Core Group on Haiti, the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community will continue to play a constructive role in Haiti.

We support a mission to Haiti in conjunction with a mission of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

Our common vision for a democratic and stable Haiti requires the long-term commitment of the international community. MINUSTAH should learn lessons from previous United Nations missions in the country. Its success hinges on how far we are willing to support MINUSTAH in its objective of institution-building, national reconstruction and economic rehabilitation.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Mr. Minister, to welcome you to the Security Council, and I warmly congratulate you on Argentina's assumption of the presidency of the Council. Finally, I thank you for convening this important debate on the situation in Haiti. I would also like to welcome the presence at this important debate of the Ministers who wished to participate and thank Mr. Valdés for his comprehensive presentation and the excellent work he is doing in Haiti.

The particularly serious crisis that has afflicted Haiti for over a year does not seem close to being resolved as so considerable challenges remain. State institutions have been permanently destabilized, and the country's economy was affected, exacerbating the economic and social marginalization of many segments of society and contributing to growing insecurity in the form of armed violence and greater impunity.

The Security Council's deployment of an interim force and, later, of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has indeed had a very positive effect on the overall situation. Algeria cannot but pay tribute to those leading the Mission and to the troops participating in it for the progress achieved. Through joint operations with the National Police of Haiti, MINUSTAH has improved security conditions, to which the principal challenge has been the persistence of armed groups that continue to pose a serious threat to the transition process under way.

For that reason, we feel that it is urgent to disarm all armed groups and bands. We believe that a complete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme is necessary. We note with satisfaction the decision of the Transitional Government to create a national disarmament commission. It seems equally important to us that the Government examine comprehensively the situation of former members of the armed forces and the question of their compensation in order to reintegrate them into society.

We call upon the Transitional Government to take the necessary measures to ensure the holding of local legislative and presidential elections. We note with satisfaction the announcement made by the Chairman of the Provisional Electoral Council concerning the finalization of the electoral law and timetable.

However, for the transitional process and the upcoming elections to succeed, we believe it is crucial that all actors of society participate, so that peace and security can be permanently restored in Haiti, and that all those that have been excluded from the transitional process be included in the democratic and electoral process, because it is vital that a national dialogue comprehending all political movements be established in order to promote national reconciliation, which is inseparable from an impartial struggle against impunity. A functional system of justice free of influence must also be established.

More than half the population of Haiti lives below the poverty line, and living conditions are constantly deteriorating, against the backdrop of a national economy dependent on foreign aid.

My delegation believes that it is crucial that the international community further commit to helping the Haitian population in the long term. As the Secretary-General has said, the activities of the international

community and the United Nations must be take place on a long-term basis. Mr. Annan added that he hoped that this time the international community would not be satisfied with putting a band aid on the situation or merely stabilizing the situation but would help the Haitians over the long haul to pick up the pieces and build a stable country.

International assistance must focus on long-term programmes aimed at the political and social reconstruction of the country. It is urgent to strengthen governance, give the population access to basic social services, ensure respect for human rights and enhance institutional capacity to ensure the rule of law. The international community has the duty to help the Government of Haiti to lay the foundations for economic growth, reduce poverty and strengthen State structures in order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of policies leading to lasting development. It must now honour its commitments by accelerating the disbursal of its pledged assistance at the World Bank donors conference.

Normalization of the political situation in Haiti and the improvement of economic conditions must be accompanied by the country's reintegration in its natural regional environment and in a framework of cooperation and solidarity provided by the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community. The presence in the Council and the statements of Ministers of the region and the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States give us hope for Haiti's normalization of relations with its neighbours, which would undoubtedly be a further contribution to peace and stability in the region as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As it is now 10 minutes past 1 p.m. and since there are still speakers remaining on the list, the wise and experienced individuals who assist the presidency have suggested that, with the consent of the Council, this meeting be suspended until 3 p.m. If there are no objections, I shall suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5110 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5110th meeting

Wednesday, 12 January 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Bielsa	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Ms. Baaziz
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Wu Zhiwu
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Haneda
	Philippines	Mr. Cato
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

The question of Haiti

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-20631 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of El Salvador, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Gallardo (El Salvador), took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the usual practice, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund.

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Bellamy to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Bellamy: Let me begin by thanking the Argentinean presidency for giving us the opportunity to address the Security Council in its open debate on Haiti.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is pleased to note the continued interest of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in the human development dimensions of building peace and security in Haiti. We have, through our team on the ground, seen many examples of personal engagement by the contributing troops to the well-being of children, whether in Gonaïves or elsewhere in the country.

I would also take this opportunity to acknowledge the important leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Juan Gabriel Valdés.

Today, I have been invited to contribute our perspective on the situation of Haitian children, who, as this Council may be aware, represent close to one out of every two Haitians. In Haiti, one child under five dies each hour. Every day, a mother dies giving birth. Four children out of 10 do not go to school. One child out of four suffers from chronic malnutrition, his or her growth stunted forever. How can we guarantee Haitian children their childhood? How can we build peace and security and the future of that country without ensuring the survival of its children?

The present peace process in Haiti is the third in a period of 15 years. Imagine if we had invested much more in Haitian children 15 years ago. Let us get it right this time around and recognize that investment in children is the best foundation to build a strong and peaceful nation.

Haiti has never had universal and free education, a fundamental factor for peacebuilding, for reconciliation and for long-term sustainable development. Education not only protects children, it builds and gives them a sense of purpose and of a more positive future. It helps them to become responsible citizens who can contribute to the development of Haiti. Simply, it takes them out of the negative vicious circle of poverty and violence. It gives them hope.

I do, however, have good news. Under the auspices of the Transitional Government, education is becoming a more dynamic sector in Haiti, actively supported by the donor community. Equally encouraging, the private education sector, which represents about 85 per cent of the total, is now more integrated into the national education system.

A truly global, integrated approach also requires essentials such as immunization, access to clean water and decent sanitation, good nutrition, care and protection from abuse. Children who have lived through what no child should ever have to live through need psychosocial affective support. Together with many partners in the United Nations and externally, we are strongly supporting actions in those areas.

Traditional donors, international financial institutions, as well as countries in the region are responding to the commitments they made about six months ago in Washington, D.C. In our view, after the difficult year 2004, Haiti is now at a turning point. There are good signs of progress, but children still face major challenges. For example, we are increasingly concerned by the thousands of children in Haiti living today on the streets, often serving as domestic helpers in slavery-like conditions, being trafficked or experiencing other forms of exploitation. Many have been drawn into gangs, their childhood literally stolen.

It is incumbent on all of us — adults, decision-makers and leaders — to help break the cycle of violence in Haiti and better to prevent and protect children from abuse. So I would like to make a special appeal to the Council and to MINUSTAH. In slum areas like Cité Soleil and very poor urban areas — for example, around Gonaïves — children are held hostage under the brutal and criminal rule of local gangs. Today, the children in those places are denied their very basic human rights. My plea to the Council is to help them. I urge the Mission to keep on securing urban areas such as Cité Soleil to guarantee a degree of normal life and to allow the Haitian institutions, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to work unhindered.

Finally, UNICEF appeals to every actor to redouble its support for Haitian children. All of us share in the responsibility for relieving their suffering. Investing now in the survival, education and protection of children is indeed investing in the future of Haiti.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome you, Sir, as you preside over the Council. We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Valdés for his very substantive briefing on developments in the settlement of the situation in Haiti and the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We welcome the efforts and overall work of the Mission he heads in the implementation of its important mandate.

Russia has consistently supported the efforts of the Transitional Government of Haiti to end the violence perpetrated by illegal armed gangs. We believe that a comprehensive and effective solution to that problem will be promoted by the prompt establishment of the national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

We welcome MINUSTAH's efforts to assist the Transitional Government in restoring law and order and in launching a comprehensive national dialogue and a process of national reconciliation open to all political forces in Haiti. It is important further to pursue work in those areas.

The Haitian authorities, working with MINUSTAH and the Organization of American States, must immediately undertake all necessary measures to prepare for the holding in 2005 of free and fair elections. We welcome the fact that work in that area is under way, and it must be continued.

The restoration of legality must be pursued in that country with due respect for the rule of law. We call on all Haitian parties strictly to respect human rights and to refrain from violence as a means of achieving their political ends. We note the steps taken by the Transitional Government to release unjustifiably detained persons. We anticipate the prompt release of all who have not been charged and expect that those who are genuinely guilty of breaking the law will be brought to justice.

It is important to develop long-term and coordinated economic, financial and technical assistance for Haiti, to be provided by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and donor countries. A clear priority in that regard is the speedy disbursement to Haiti of funds pledged at the international donors' conference held in July 2004.

We anticipate that the deployment of MINUSTAH's military and police contingents will be sped up, so as to bring their numbers up to the strength authorized by the Security Council. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Council of Russia's decision to provide MINUSTAH with a team of civilian police officers.

The challenge for both the people of Haiti and the international community is to take into account the lessons of the past and prevent a resurgence of inst ility in Haiti that would negate the many years of what, frankly, has been a costly joint effort to normalize life in that country.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Allow me to formally congratulate Argentina on becoming a member of the Security Council and on assuming the presidency of the Council. We are honoured to have you, Sir, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, chairing the meeting today, which is a clear sign of the importance your country attaches to finding a peaceful and durable solution to the situation in Haiti. I also wish to thank Ambassador Valdés for his comprehensive briefing. Denmark fully supports his work as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). My Government urges all parties involved — at the national, regional and international

levels — to support the work of the United Nations in Haiti.

Denmark also fully associates itself with the statement that the Ambassador of Luxembourg will deliver shortly on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Mr. President, a secure environment is a precondition for a viable political process and for long-term development in Haiti. Recurring incidents of violence remind us of the urgent need to stabilize the still-volatile security situation. In that context, we urge all Haitians to refrain from using any kind of violence to achieve their political goals.

Denmark welcomes the recent deployment of additional military and civilian police units to MINUSTAH. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the many troop contributors. We are encouraged by the reported improvement of the security situation at the end of 2004, and would like to see further action by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police to stabilize the situation in all parts of the country. In that connection, my Government would like to underscore the importance of demonstrating respect for all human rights.

The ongoing high level of violence underlines the urgent need for the effective removal of all illegal weapons from the streets of Haiti. With the assistance of MINUSTAH, the Transitional Government should initiate a comprehensive and community-based disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. In that respect, Denmark urges the Government to establish without delay a national commission on DDR.

A national reconciliation process is very much needed. Although the United Nations and regional partners can play an important supportive role in such a process, the initiative must come from within Haitian society itself, and it must be based on the broadest possible national political dialogue.

The Transitional Government should take the lead in the national reconciliation process. We therefore call on the Transitional Government to continue to explore avenues for the creation of an all-inclusive political process that encourages all segments of Haitian society to participate. That process should be initiated before the upcoming elections later this year.

Only 10 months from now, local, parliamentary and presidential elections will take place in Haiti. We welcome the agreement signed recently between MINUSTAH, the Transitional Government, the United Nations Development Programme and the Provisional Electoral Council on the organization of the elections. Denmark urges all parties involved to continue to make all the necessary preparations to ensure truly free and fair elections that will ultimately lead to the handing over of power to an elected Government.

Poverty, extreme inequality and public corruption have fuelled authoritarian rule and violence for decades. The Haitian people longs for sustained and equitable economic and social development. There is a clear need for both long-term development programmes and quick-impact projects. Substantial funds were pledged at the international donors' conference on Haiti last summer, where the EU emerged as the largest donor. Regrettably, only little of the aid pledged at the conference has been disbursed so far. My Government urges financial institutions, international organizations and donor countries to accelerate the disbursement of pledged funds. In that regard, we welcome the recent release of resources by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Part of the problem stems from administrative bottlenecks in Haiti itself. The lack of administrative capacity and resources within the Transitional Government and State institutions is hindering the proper preparation and implementation of development projects. Donors should therefore pay special attention to the urgent need for capacity building within the Transitional Government, as a prerequisite for effective development cooperation.

For the Haitian people, last year was supposed to be a year of celebration marking the bicentenary of its victory over slavery and colonization. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Instead Haitians found themselves in the midst of the kind of violent political unrest that has dominated Haiti for too long. It is vital that, this time, the international community delivers on its promises and helps the Haitian people to establish the foundation for a secure environment and economic and social development based on democratic principles, the rule of law, good governance and respect for all human rights. The Haitian people needs, deserves and expects that to happen.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Denmark for her kind words addressed to my country.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, and to congratulate you for your timely initiative to hold a debate on the situation in Haiti. I am also pleased to welcome the presence of Ambassador Valdés, to whom I am particularly grateful for having briefed us on the situation in Haiti. I also wish to take this opportunity to tell Ambassador Valdés how much we appreciate his work on the ground.

The briefing made by Ambassador Valdés clearly illustrated that Haiti is facing several major challenges: achieving success in the political transition process that has been taking place for a year now, improving the security situation, re-launching the Haitian economy in the short- and medium-term and promoting sustainable development.

The political crisis that has rocked Haiti has deep roots in Haitian society. It is important that Haitians and the international community face the obvious, namely, that peace in Haiti will only be sustainable if it is based on a national consensus forged through the participation of all of the country's inhabitants.

From this perspective, it is important that, as they adopt positions and take action, the Transitional Government and the various institutions that are in place work, on a daily basis to promote the creation of an environment that inspires unity and restores the confidence of all those who fear for their future because of their political sympathies or affiliations. They will need to work tirelessly to bring about national reconciliation and inclusiveness wherever possible.

In several months' time, the country will hold legislative and presidential elections — the final milestone on its journey towards a definitive return to the great family of the world's democracies. Given the recent history of the country, we again urge the Haitian political class to make the political concessions necessary to facilitate the establishment of institutions that will promote the return of peace and stability in the country after the elections. The Transitional Government should spare no effort to integrate within the political arena all Haitian parties, as long as they reject violence.

The second major challenge is to improve the security situation, which continues to be of great concern because of the abuses being carried out by the armed groups that hold sway in poor areas and markets. The international community must work to ensure the better protection of human rights and citizens' rights in Haiti.

Now that MINUSTAH has sufficient strength to be fully operational, it needs to address the problem of the lack of security with due resolve. We welcome its recent success in this area. We believe that, in accordance with its mandate, MINUSTAH can play an active role in assisting the Transitional Government to pursue the necessary major reforms being undertaken in the area of security. From this perspective, the rebuilding of the Haitian police and the army of the republic are of paramount importance.

MINUSTAH now needs to increase its efforts, working in an energetic and vigorous fashion with the Haitian National Police, with a view to discouraging, once and for all, the illegal armed gangs that continue to prefer the language of arms to that of dialogue in pursuing their demands.

In analysing sources of violence in Haiti, it is clear to us that political violence and criminal violence fuel each other. In order to eliminate such violence, we must urgently establish an integrated, comprehensive programme of disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration, which must take into account the problems of the country.

In this context, we must link paid disarmament and the rejection of violence with the integration of the people involved in a programme that brings together vocational reintegration with rehabilitation, through activities to promote a culture of non-violence and peace, as advocated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). However, such an approach can provide specific results only if Haitians themselves believe in peace and work to establish it within the culture, focusing on the goals of economic recovery and social development.

The Transitional Government of Haiti must urgently step up the process of establishing a national disarmament commission and work to mobilize the resources pledged to the country during the donors conference held in Washington in July 2004, so as to fund the implementation of the programme to create 30,000 jobs in the public sector and in the area of

environmental protection. In this context, the key to success lies in support for small and medium-sized companies.

A strategic approach that is well though. out could help to ensure an effective interface between assistance for stabilization and peacekeeping on the one hand, and peacebuilding and the promotion of sustainable development on the other, by permitting immediate social change and necessary reform. That is the second major challenge facing Haiti.

In this regard, we believe that MINUSTAH must fully carry out its complex mandate so as to achieve tangible results that are consonant with the many human, financial and material investments that have been agreed to in recent months by the Transitional Government and the international community with a view to ensuring collective responsibility for the future of the country.

Prospects for the future of the country must be restored by making use of the unprecedented wave of solidarity that has been demonstrated by all the countries in the region to help in Haiti's recovery. It is also essential for Haiti to regain its place within its natural family — the Caribbean Community. We urge the States members of that body to overcome their internal differences, which are hindering unity of action with respect to that brotherly country, whose people have, for decades, been suffering as a result of poverty and political violence.

In conclusion, we welcome the establishment and the beginning of the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council. The establishment of the Advisory Group is further proof of the international community's mobilization in favour of Haiti. We also welcome initiatives to promote a better contribution by the Haitian diaspora to the rebuilding of the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic — that sounds as though I am announcing to everyone that it is my birthday so as to receive gifts. But that is how the system works.

In my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, it is a privilege to address the Security Council. My country feels respect and friendship towards the Haitian people. We are also grateful to Haiti. On 9 June 1956, Argentina suffered a coup d'état. Seven rebels struggling to re-establish the constitutional order, were granted asylum at the Haitian embassy in Buenos Aires. The Ambassador of Haiti at the time, Jean Brierre, saved his guests from being abducted and shot, with words that we in Argentina still remember today. He said,

> "Just because Haiti is a small country does not mean that it will allow such an abuse. Quite the contrary, small countries must be scrupulously respected because they are small — so that the rule of law remains a moral imperative, not something based on force".

My country also feels compassion for Haiti — compassion in its true meaning, which is to understand the suffering of others and to wish to share it.

More than a decade ago, the international community realized that it was necessary to help Haiti to break out of the vicious circle of poverty, authoritarianism, violence and desolation. As Argentina is presiding over the Security Council this month of January 2005, we proposed to convene an open debate on Haiti in the hope of finding realistic and lasting solutions. The Organization has established the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), headed by a talented friend of my country, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés of Chile, whom we congratulate on his outstanding performance. MINUSTAH includes civilian and military personnel from all over the world. It is an operation in which, for the first time, many American States have decided to act together: we feel that MINUSTAH is our mission.

The regional presence in Haiti has made us a part of a search for a multifaceted solution that has a real chance of enduring. In this context, my country would like to see the creation of a number of mechanisms for cooperation. Furthermore, working within our capacities, Argentina is undertaking an analysis to determine the potential for Haiti to export its products to Argentina with a view to facilitating access to our markets.

In the area of human rights — which is one of the pillars of our foreign policy — my country supports the efforts of the Transitional Government and urges it to be extremely careful so that there are no violations of the Haitians' basic rights.

In the humanitarian field, our country has also wished to have a presence in Haiti. President Kirchner mandated the participation of White Helmets for humanitarian assistance. Solidarity is an excellent therapy for many mental states: arrogance, desperation, indifference, egomania.

In the context of rebuilding institutions, Argentina has offered technical assistance to support the Transitional Government in the tasks of organizing, supervising and holding free and fair elections as soon as possible. For the electoral process to succeed, a broad-based dialogue among all the local political forces is essential, the only condition being that they explicitly reject the use of violence. That includes leaders of the Fanmi Lavalas who have accepted the democratic process and have rejected violence.

If being in Haiti today is a moral obligation, the international community must provide the assistance needed to cooperate in the functioning of a Haitian State apparatus that can provide essential needs to the country's inhabitants. The reconstruction of the Haitian economy, together with the restoration of democratic institutions and the maintenance of a secure environment based on respect for the law, is essential.

The donor conference held in Washington represents a new source of opportunities and hope for Haiti, and we urge that it be translated into concrete action. It will be necessary to identify infrastructure projects and innovative cooperation mechanisms that will generate economic reconstruction. Donors must strive to honour their commitments.

We also hope that the programme of work formulated by the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank will be an action framework through which we, together with the authorities of Haiti, can begin to turn the situation around. For projects that still lack essential technical expertise, the region offers its most competent technicians, who can join their efforts with those already under way.

Sometimes, speaking with excessive candour can leave the audience with the feeling that the speaker has not been sincere enough. However, I have tried to express myself with candour and also with sincerity. My country renews its commitment to work for development, peaceful understanding and social justice in Haiti. I hope that this joint effort, which is the purpose of this debate, will lighten the path towards overcoming the difficulties and the injustice in Haiti, that beloved Caribbean country.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Balarezo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I want to congratulate Argentina on the leadership it has demonstrated in the presidency of the Security Council this month and also to congratulate it on this initiative, which enables us to specifically address a most important issue, which is one of the complex crises faced by the region. I should also like to welcome the presence of Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and to thank him for his report, which has informed us in greater detail about the progress made.

As our heads of State reiterated at the Rio Group Summit last November, the stabilization, reconstruction and development of Haiti are regional priorities. That is why we welcome the strong response from countries of the region in support of Haiti, which, in the specific case of Peru, is expressed in the contribution of a military contingent to MINUSTAH.

But complex crises like the case of Haiti also highlight the new challenges to international security that confront the United Nations. Therefore, our commitment to international peace and security is regional, but it is also universal. That is why Peru participates in five peacekeeping operations in Africa and Cyprus.

For Peru, restoring the Transitional Government's control over civil order throughout the country is a basic element of stability in Haiti; nothing is more important than that aspect. However, in the case of Haiti, the insecurity arising from the persistence of illegal armed groups requires a special political and inclusive effort. We see that the consolidation of a sustainable security environment requires simultaneous action on various fronts, especially in the political, institutional and social development of the country.

We must resolutely support the reconstruction of national capacities to strengthen the rule of law and the exercise of civil rights and to help the people overcome poverty. Peru is paying particular attention to the

development and implementation of the electoral timetable planned for this year in Haiti. We also need a transparent, robust and independent judiciary. That will permit full respect for human rights and a resolute fight against impunity and corruption. Strengthening the judiciary is paramount.

The political and institutional development of Haiti is closely linked to economic and social development. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategy that will take into account the many challenges facing the country. Peru believes there must be a firm commitment on the part of the international community to the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

Certainly, the Haitian Government has a basic responsibility to carry out the domestic efforts necessary to lay the foundations for sustained growth and poverty reduction. But the fact is that Haiti does not have the resources to address the great challenge of development on its own. Haiti requires international cooperation in terms of financial and technical assistance. Therefore, it is very important that MINUSTAH devote special attention not only to the humanitarian aspect, but also, and above all, to the dimension of long-term development. Haiti requires resolute support from the United Nations, the donor community and the international financial institutions.

In its short period of existence, MINUSTAH — thanks to the troop contributors, the Mission authorities and the Security Council — has made progress in implementing its mandate, including the civil component, security and the preparation of the forthcoming elections. But additional efforts are needed in terms of contributing military and police staff, disarmament, stabilizing the political system and rebuilding Haiti.

Therefore, we must continue to provide to MINUSTAH all the necessary means so that, at the end of its mission, we will have a successful experience. A good sign for the future would be to establish a longer mandate period when MINUSTAH's mandate is renewed. In addition — and this is a fundamental aspect — we need to ensure that the funds pledged to Haiti are disbursed.

In conclusion, we have the opportunity to create the conditions for a promising future in Haiti. And, as the Minister for Foreign Relations of Chile said, we must not fail in that effort.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for my country, Sir, that I am speaking in this forum for the first time during this semester under your presidency and on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes this opportunity to address the situation in Haiti and notes that the presence here of several high-ranking political personalities underlines the importance of today's debate. The European Union welcomes also the report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, as well as the unanimous decision taken by the Security Council on 29 November 2004 to extend the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) until June 2005, with the intention of extending it for further periods.

The European Union notes that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti is nearly up to its full authorized strength and that this has increased its ability to use a more robust approach in implementing its mandate, in particular when it comes to conducting joint operations with the Haitian National Police against illegal armed groups.

The European Union welcomes the recent positive developments on the ground but notes that further action is required to improve the overall security situation in the country, which remains of concern. In some areas, the lack of security is still an impediment to effective humanitarian assistance and project implementation.

The European Union urges all parties without exception to refrain from any kind of violent behaviour that would further imperil the welfare of the Haitian people, to abide by the rule of law and to respect human rights. We call on the Transitional Government to take the necessary measures to put an end to impunity.

We strongly believe that the ongoing crisis in Haiti can be resolved only by peaceful means, through a constitutional and inclusive political process of national dialogue, compromise and reconciliation, leading to free and fair elections by the end of this year and to the transfer of power to elected authorities. We strongly encourage the Transitional Government to pursue its efforts in this regard, with the assistance of the United Nations Stabilization Mission. In that context, it is important that all political forces publicly renounce violence and join the democratic and electoral process.

The European Union strongly supports the adjustments proposed by the Secretary-General in November 2004 with regard to the structure of MINUSTAH, in particular adding a formed police unit to provide enhanced operational support to the Haitian National Police; implementing quick-impact projects that will directly improve the lives of the Haitian people; and increasing MINUSTAH's capacity to implement projects in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into the community.

In that context, the European Union encourages the Transitional Government of Haiti, assisted by MINUSTAH, to redouble, as a matter of highest priority, its current efforts aimed at removing all illegal weapons from the streets and fully to disarm all armed groups, in order not to jeopardize the democratic transition process under way.

With 271 million euros' worth of pledges, the European Union has emerged as the largest single donor from the pledging conference on Haiti held in Washington in July 2004. Those pledges do not include contributions from individual EU member States. The European Union will make every effort to reduce bottlenecks and to disburse those funds promptly, with a view to creating employment and achieving quick and visible changes. A total of 45 million euros has recently been approved for infrastructure projects, and 27 million euros for rehabilitation projects. To promote the rule of law, the European Union, together with Canada, has furthermore launched an important project aimed at reforming the judiciary system.

The European Union is also providing substantial financial support for the organization of elections. Haiti is also on the European Union's priority list for electoral observation for the local, parliamentarian and presidential elections, scheduled to take place in November and December 2005. An exploratory mission is scheduled to be dispatched in June to assess the feasibility of a European Union election observation mission to Haiti.

The European Union fully supports the efforts by the countries of the region, as well as those undertaken by regional groups such as the Organization of American States. We believe that the United Nations should be present in Haiti for as long as necessary, with a view to encouraging international support for the sustainable political, social, economic and ecological development of the country. In that context, we support the activities of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

The European Union, for its part, remains committed to supporting the ongoing political process and to playing its role in providing further help to alleviate the Haitian people's suffering by means of prompt humanitarian aid and continued long-term assistance, with a view to contributing to lasting peace and stability in Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Guatemala, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to welcome your presence and to congratulate your country for having begun its term of office as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the exercise of the presidency, and for having taken, in this first month of the new year, the initiative of convening an open meeting to discuss the situation in Haiti. Guatemala wishes you every success.

We would like also to express our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, for his comprehensive presentation on recent developments, and for the work he has been doing as head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Since the very beginning of the Haitian crisis, my country has expressed its solidarity with the people and the authorities of that country. Our Government has also publicly expressed its sincere wish that all political sectors in Haiti find a way of preserving democracy and of creating a favourable environment that will help ensure the sustainable development of the country. We know that this objective can be

accomplished only if the international community promotes a cooperative long-term effort that is not only generous in nature and well coordinated but also goes beyond merely putting an end to violence and confrontation.

The security situation in the country, the weakness of the judiciary and the ongoing problem of impunity are but a few of the major obstacles that the Haitian people face. That is why Guatemala deems it important that the international community and relevant regional organizations continue to support Haiti in the promotion and protection of fundamental rights, particularly of women and children, assisting in the investigation of abuses and seeking to end impunity through the reform and strengthening of institutions charged with the administration of justice. As we know from firsthand experience, that is not an easy task.

We also appeal to the Transitional Government to take concrete measures to prevent such abuses through the effective investigation of reported cases and the prosecution of those responsible. We reiterate the need to follow procedures that have proved to be fair and effective and that are consistent with international norms and the corresponding right of all to due process — in particular the right to be heard by a competent, independent and impartial court without discrimination of any kind.

The delegation of Guatemala believes that another fundamental problem is the extreme poverty prevailing in the country as well as the high rate of illiteracy and malnutrition that continue to deprive the Haitian people of their basic economic, social and cultural rights. That in turn aggravates the consequences of the lack of observance of their basic civil and political rights.

We are aware of the fact that this represents a tremendous challenge to the Transitional Government. We urge it, in collaboration with all sectors of society and the support of the international community, to design and implement the development plan that will enable it to meet the fundamental economic and social needs of every Haitian citizen.

It is also important to take into account at all times the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, as we saw with tropical storm Jeanne, which struck the country a few months ago.

Accordingly, we believe that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti set up by the Economic and Social Council and reactivated by a decision adopted on 15 November 2004 is a mechanism that has contributed to revitalizing the link between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. It has also provided a tangible framework within which the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions have deepened their cooperation in support of Haiti.

In keeping with its policy of promoting multilateral solutions to conflicts, the Government of Guatemala has reaffirmed its commitment and its willingness to participate in MINUSTAH, established by the Council pursuant to resolution 1542 (2004). In that framework, a contingent of Guatemalan military police officers constitutes our current contribution to MINUSTAH.

Guatemala reaffirms its support for the Stabilization Mission, which is working tirelessly to carry out its mandate to consolidate stability in the country, support the constitutional and political process, help the Transitional Government to hold elections and assist Haitian institutions in ensuring respect for human rights, among other tasks.

Thus, it is important to recognize that a military presence alone cannot ensure the political stabilization of Haiti. It is worrisome that prevailing conditions make it difficult to bring about solid and lasting national reconciliation. Coordination among the regional organizations, agencies, programmes and non-governmental organizations in support of the Transitional Government's establishment of a secure and stable environment is a crucial element for fully taking the most efficient advantage of all the work being carried out on the ground.

Guatemala stresses the importance of the elections scheduled to take place in Haiti at the end of 2005. We believe that they will provide an opportunity to create greater stability for the country's future.

Finally, in connection with that challenge and all the other challenges that Haiti and its people face, my delegation renews its appeal to the international community to provide Haiti with the support and assistance needed to overcome the difficulties of the past and enable the country to advance towards a future that will witness the full realization of the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mexico, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to wish all success to Argentina as it begins its mandate on the Security Council and assumes the presidency for the month of January.

The question of Haiti has particular relevance in the foreign policy of Mexico. For that reason, my Government considers this debate, wisely convened by the Argentine presidency, to be a good opportunity to share some of the guiding ideas of our policy on that Caribbean country.

Mexico supports the efforts of the international community, in particular those of our continent, to restore peace and security in Haiti and to reconstruct its democratic institutions. Moreover, we express our firmest support for the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose principal civil and military component is of Latin American origin. In particular, Mexico expresses its support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of MINUSTAH, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés.

Mexico agrees with Secretary-General Kofi Annan that the international community's commitments towards Haiti should be of a comprehensive and long-term nature, with the goal of resolving the structural problems that that brotherly country continues to face.

We believe that the priority for 2005 should be to promote political dialogue among all groups of actors in Haiti, without exclusion, with a view to preparing and holding the local and presidential elections, which should be participatory, representative and legitimate.

At the same time, it is necessary to maintain a medium- and long-term plan for the reconstruction of solid institutions for Haitian society, especially in the areas of justice administration and prosecution, human rights, the fight against poverty, the creation of infrastructure and the development of high-quality health, education and other services.

The participation and support of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the resolution of the Haitian crisis are fundamental. For that reason, the initiatives taken in the framework of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, other regional groupings and financial organizations should be coordinated with the Caribbean countries.

In the various forums and mechanisms concerned with the Haitian crisis, Mexico will continue to offer its support, especially in the reconstruction of the country's civilian institutions. As well, we will continue to provide timely humanitarian assistance as we have been doing so far.

Allow me to give a brief account of the actions of cooperation taken by Mexico at the bilateral and regional levels. During 2004, the Government of Mexico sent emergency humanitarian aid to Haiti on four occasions. In April, Mexico responded to the appeal of the interim President, Mr. Boniface Alexandre, and we sent 1,012 tons of aid, in particular food and medicines. On 5 June, Mexico sent 19 tons of food and medicine in response to the crisis caused by the heavy rains that devastated Haitian communities along the border with the Dominican Republic. On 11 and 12 October, the Government of Mexico sent to Haiti two Hercules C-130 aeroplanes of the Mexican air force with 25 tons of aid to alleviate the damage caused by Tropical Storm Jeanne. That assistance included a group of 16 experts, medical material, various kinds of equipment and food. Finally, on 17 November, a Mexican navy ship arrived at Port-au-Prince transporting specialized medical personnel and civilian engineers as well as a helicopter and an ambulance. During its stay, the team of medical specialists carried out many surgical operations and gave medical assistance to more than 1,000 persons.

In the regional context, we note Mexico's cooperation in electoral assistance through the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico. In response to the request of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Electoral Institute is currently providing technical support in the organization, administration and development of the process for the elections to take place in Haiti this year. To that end, from 22 to 27 November, the members of the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council participated in an international workshop in Mexico on electoral administration organized with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the OAS. Representatives of electoral organizations from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama and Venezuela also participated. As well, the Institute has named two Mexican officials to participate in the OAS Special Mission in Haiti. In the second quarter of 2005,

Mexico will make a voluntary contribution of $20,000 to the OAS Special Mission.

In the framework of the last July's donors conference for Haiti organized by the Inter-American Development Bank, Mexico pledged $40,000 worth of cooperation in the technical-scientific and cultural-educational areas; those resources will be used to facilitate the movement of experts and technicians between the two countries. The modalities for cooperation include capacity-building and assessments in areas such as agriculture, drinking water, training in HIV/AIDS prevention and medical attention, diplomatic training, drainage engineering and the production and quality-control of seeds.

At the subregional level, Mexico is exploring various areas of cooperation within the Group of Three, comprising Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia, and within the Rio Group.

Finally, at the bilateral level, last October, Mexican officials, including our Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Latin America and the Caribbean, made a working visit to Haiti to evaluate possible areas of cooperation. The following were identified.

In the area of the reconstruction of highways, Mexico commited itself to study contributing to financing the reconstruction of sections of the highway between Saint-Marc and Gonaïves.

In the area of reforestation, the Secretariat of the Environment of Mexico and the Ministry of Environment of Haiti signed a preliminary agreement on cooperation on two specific projects: the ongoing evaluation of natural resources in the arid ecosystem of north-west Haiti and the administration of La Visite National Park.

In the educational realm, Mexico has offered a package of 40 scholarships for high school students who wish to study in our country beginning in the 2005 school year. Likewise, it has been agreed to create the Gerard Pierre Charles chair at the State University of Haiti in recognition of the work of that distinguished intellectual and politician of Haiti who lived in Mexico for more than 20 years.

To date, those have been Mexico's most relevant contributions to the pacification and stabilization of Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Norway, on whom I now call.

Mr. Frydenlund (Norway): Norway welcomes this important opportunity to address the situation in Haiti and would like to use the occasion to express solidarity with Haiti and its population. Further, we would like to express our strong support for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

The security situation in Haiti continues to be an obstacle to sustained democratic and economic development in the country. Haiti now needs both to restore security and to implement investment and aid in order to lay the foundations for the country's reconstruction and the strengthening of the rule of law. In those efforts, it is essential that the international community confirm its long-term commitment to assisting Haiti. Faced with a difficult situation, we should intensify our efforts rather than turn our attention elsewhere.

There is a strong need to promote and facilitate national reconciliation in an open and inclusive process. Political training is important for national opinion leaders and other social and political actors in order to ensure the continued strengthening of democracy in Haiti.

Over the past six years, Norway has been involved in facilitating political dialogue and consensus-building. It is Norway's view that, by bringing political groups into a dialogue based on democratic values and practices, an environment for democratic development can be established. Norway intends to continue those efforts, in close coordination and cooperation with national and international efforts. Norway also welcomes the joint efforts to prepare for fair and transparent elections to be held in November. Norway fully supports and has made financial contributions to the Organization of American States and its electoral assistance to Haiti.

Norway maintains its commitment to Haiti. We will continue to support the processes of dialogue and reconciliation and will be pleased to coordinate with others in those efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Ecuador, on whom I now call.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish at the outset to extend to you, Sir, the most cordial congratulations of the Government and people of Ecuador on Argentina's well-deserved election to the Council. In my capacity as representative of a former non-permanent member of the Council, I express my delegation's gratification at addressing you as President of this United Nations organ.

I also wish to thank my colleague and friend Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés for his briefing and his efforts.

I further wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this very timely open debate so that the international community can understand the magnitude of the problems besetting Haiti and get a clear picture of the crisis affecting that Caribbean nation.

Ecuador fully supports the Haitian democratic institutions and reiterates the appeal made to them and to the political leadership and people of Haiti — issued at the 4917th meeting of the Council in February 2004, almost a year ago — to establish channels for dialogue and democratic understanding that would allow them to resolve their country's ongoing problems peacefully and to achieve a national reconciliation that would strengthen the roots of democracy and bolster the country's efforts to improve political, economic and social conditions with a view to ensuring the prosperity and sustainable development of future generations in a framework of peace, tolerance and national harmony.

While Ecuador is aware of the efforts being deployed in Haiti to stabilize the situation, preserve the legal and political order, protect human rights and prevent a humanitarian crisis, it believes that, in the current circumstances, the international community must make a greater and more decisive contribution to assisting and strengthening the institutions of that country.

However, as my delegation has underscored on other occasions, we fully agree with the statement, made on behalf of the Rio Group in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, that peace cannot last without development, that we must counter the underlying causes of conflict, and that the promotion of development, the rule of law, the establishment of reliable transitional mechanisms of justice, attention to the special needs of women and children in armed conflict, and the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are, inter alia, crucial to the consolidation of democratic institutions in post-conflict countries.

Ecuador, a firm defender of the United Nations Charter, believes that we must all commit ourselves to peacebuilding. Aware of its responsibilities as a Member of this Organization to contribute to the best of its abilities to the establishment of peace and security throughout the world, Ecuador has decided to participate in Haiti. On 29 September 2004, we signed a memorandum of understanding to contribute to the United Nations reserve forces in that brotherly Caribbean country by dispatching a company of 66 military engineers and trucks in a joint operation with Chile.

In resolution 1576 (2004) of 29 November 2004, the Security Council underlined that political reconciliation and economic reconstruction efforts remain key to the stability and security of Haiti and urged the Transitional Government to continue to make progress in the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework, including by developing concrete projects for economic development, in close cooperation with, and with the full assistance of, the international community, in particular the United Nations and international financial institutions. At the same time, the Council urged the relevant financial institutions and donor countries to disburse promptly the funds pledged at the International Donors Conference on Haiti held in Washington, D.C. on 19 and 20 July 2004.

My delegation therefore stresses the spirit of that resolution and recalls the Security Council's call on the international financial institutions and the donors to disburse without delay the funds pledged in Washington, D.C. We cordially appeal to them resolutely to cooperate to resolve the situation in Haiti in all its aspects.

Ecuador is ready to confront the challenges of stabilizing Haiti and endorses a multidimensional approach to peacekeeping operations. We are prepared to contribute to such operations and to world security under United Nations auspices, but we feel that the international community should demonstrate greater

sensitivity and resolve in facing the threats to democratic institutions, human rights and economic development in Haiti. That is all the more important when we consider that countries with scarce economic resources, like Ecuador and others in the Latin American and Caribbean region, have demonstrated their profound commitment to the success of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti by offering their assistance and contributing military personnel in solidarity and cooperation with the Haitian nation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Paraguay.

Mr. Buffa (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate Minister Rafael Bielsa and the Argentine Republic on their timely initiative of convening an open debate on Haiti during the Argentine presidency of the Security Council this month. It is extremely important for Paraguay to see the willingness of the Security Council to make known and explain topics of overarching interest to all Member States, and in particular matters related to security and institutional stabilization in countries affected by internal conflict.

The establishment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in June 2004 provided the endorsement necessary to guarantee an orderly and transparent transition to institutional and political recovery in the Republic of Haiti, thereby averting destabilizing effects in the region. We would therefore like to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti, Mr. Juan Valdés, for his detailed briefing on the current situation, which pointed to substantive progress towards the normalization of activities in the country.

We are also pleased to note the active joint participation of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations in the electoral process this year, which will be of vital importance. We therefore hope that that process will also have the resolute support of other institutions and States in order to ensure free and transparent elections with the participation of all Haitians.

The human and financial resources mobilized to date for MINUSTAH confirm the willingness of Member States to decisively support multilateral cooperation to overcome the climate of instability and disorder that prevailed during Haiti's political crisis and that caused significant damage and irreparable losses to the Haitian people. Paraguay is taking part in the Stabilization Mission by contributing staff officers. However, for logistical reasons beyond our control, and although our desire remains firm and committed, we have had to postpone to a later stage the deployment of troops to the field.

Paraguay welcomes the active mobilization of a great number of Latin American and Caribbean Member States, which has provided an effective and decisive response to a humanitarian emergency besetting a country of the region. Meanwhile, as we have heard during this open debate, financial contributions are still lagging. We urge donor countries and financial institutions to streamline the process of fulfilling the pledges they made at the donors conference in Washington last year.

Finally, we would like to place on record Paraguay's commitment to continue to support the cause and ideals of the United Nations as it seeks to bring about lasting stability and development for its Member States, in particular for those that have for far too long seen their aspirations thwarted when it comes to providing their citizens with the stability and institutional development necessary to support their legitimate right to achieve sustainable economic and social development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Paraguay for his kind words addressed to my country.

I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rock (Canada): Let me say at the outset how much the Government of Canada appreciates the opportunity to take part in this discussion today. This initiative on the part of the Government of Argentina furnishes us with additional evidence of the sincerity of that Government's commitment to the cause of Haitian reconstruction. The involvement today of so many senior Government representatives from this hemisphere and elsewhere demonstrates the truly international and interregional nature of this cooperative work.

Almost one year has passed now since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide left Haiti, a country then in a state of turmoil and on the brink of civil war. The efforts of the Council — first by authorizing the deployment of the Multinational Interim Force and,

subsequently, by establishing the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) — have provided important support to the Transitional Government of Haiti and to its efforts to re-establish stability and security, promote reconciliation and relaunch the democratic process. We believe that, under United Nations leadership, a coordinated approach between national actors and regional and international partners will ensure a better future for all Haitians.

We wish to say a word in particular about Juan Gabriel Valdés, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who has worked so effectively and who has won the confidence and respect of all actors with his frankness, his skill and his evident commitment.

Canada would respectfully suggest that Haiti currently faces three fundamental and pressing challenges. The first challenge is to establish and sustain security and implement comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). The second is to ensure economic and social reconstruction. And the third is to promote national reconciliation and relaunch the democratic process in Haiti. While efforts to respond to those three areas must of course be made in parallel, it seems clear that without a secure environment economic and social reconstruction cannot happen, reconciliation will remain but a hope and the democratic process eventually leading to fair and free elections cannot proceed.

Let me first deal briefly with the security challenge. Canada welcomes the efforts of the Transitional Government to begin to address the issue of former members of the Haitian armed forces. That problem continues to have serious implications for the security situation, in particular with regard to the capacity of the Haitian National Police and MINUSTAH to operate effectively in Haiti. Canada welcomes the intent and actions of the Transitional Government of Haiti in tackling that issue, including through its plan to establish a national commission on DDR. But we suggest that it must be addressed as a matter of utmost urgency. We also suggest that the reinsertion of any members of the former armed forces into the Haitian National Police or other security apparatus should involve strict and comprehensive screening and training procedures, to ensure a transparent, accountable and effective process.

Canada will continue to do its part, as evidenced by our current contribution to MINUSTAH, in particular to its civilian police component. In that regard, we particularly welcome the recent joint operations between MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police that have successfully supported the restoration and maintenance of the rule of law, public safety and public order in Haiti. Those operations are excellent examples of the type of close coordination that is essential to our collective efforts to create a secure and stable environment. We hope they will continue. However, we would suggest that true security cannot be attained without an end to impunity and without the effective promotion and protection of human rights.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada condemns all violations of human rights. We urge the Transitional Government to ensure that due process is followed and that individuals subject to imprisonment are formally charged in accordance with Haitian law. We welcome the investigation recently launched by MINUSTAH into alleged extrajudicial executions committed by the Haitian National Police. We also urge an immediate end to the unauthorized exercise of law enforcement functions by armed groups.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me turn briefly to the challenge posed by social and economic reconstruction. At the December meeting of the Contact Group, donors identified the slow pace of disbursements as perhaps the most significant problem. We all agreed to look proactively at reducing bottlenecks and at strengthening support for capacity-building in ministries that require assistance. The need to rapidly identify four or five priority projects that can deliver much-needed quick results on the ground is a pressing one. We are working hard with the Transitional Government and our partners to identify solutions.

Since December, the Canadian International Development Agency has provided 16 million Canadian dollars to the Transitional Government of Haiti to assist it in the clearance of arrears to the World Bank. In clearing its arrears, the Transitional Government becomes eligible for new modes of financial support provided by the Bank. In addition, part of the contribution will go towards the construction of the Route de Rail in Port-au-Prince, a

highly visible project, co-funded with the European Commission and implemented in collaboration with MINUSTAH, which will open up a southern exit from Port-au-Prince and create employment in the surrounding area, a disadvantaged neighbourhood of the capital.

Clearly, more must be done quickly to rebuild Haiti, and Canada remains conscious that our commitment must also be sustained over the longer term.

We are pleased to chair the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council that will examine Haiti's development challenges. That committed group, which includes Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Haiti, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago, is working actively with the Transitional Government, with MINUSTAH, with international financial institutions and with the Special Representative to identify obstacles to development. We have already identified areas such as capacity-building, sustainable funding for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the involvement of the Haitian diaspora as requiring particular attention. The Group welcomes the opportunity to work with the Security Council in addressing the situation in Haiti, and to that end hopes that a joint mission to Haiti can soon be organized.

Prime Minister Martin, speaking both in Haiti and at the Montreal Conference on the Haitian Diaspora in December, encouraged all Haitians to renounce violence and participate in a genuine and broad-based national reconciliation process. He also promised Canadian support for the re-establishment of democracy through free and fair elections. We are pleased to note that this week, Canada committed to providing $17 million in support of Haiti's electoral processes, to assist the Provisional Electoral Council in fulfilling its mandate. But successful elections require not only that technical conditions be met, but also that an appropriate political context be developed. That context can be created only through an open and forthright national dialogue among all sectors of Haitian society and the main political parties, including Fanmi Lavalas.

We consider that a national dialogue is of fundamental importance in mobilizing all Haitians for the restoration of democratic order and the reconstruction and sustainable development of the country. We welcome Prime Minister Latortue's recent commitments to do what it takes to launch this process. We urge all political actors to renounce violence and to take part fully.

Canada has committed more than $180 million over two years for the reconstruction of Haiti. We understand that the task is formidable, that it will be costly. But the international community cannot again afford to fail the Haitian people. Canada wants to help build a stable, democratic and prosperous society in Haiti. We stand ready to continue to work with the Transitional Government, the United Nations and our other international partners towards this end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Morocco, on whom I now call.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You are well known for your great diplomatic experience and commitment to peace in your continent, and specifically in the Caribbean region and Haiti. We are convinced that, under the outstanding leadership of Ambassador César Mayoral, the Argentine team will discharge its responsibilities to the fullest. Indeed, it has already begun to do so, to the satisfaction of all.

I should also like to congratulate all of the new Council members and to pay tribute to the very positive and fruitful work of the Algerian presidency during the month of December.

I welcome your initiative, Mr. President, to convene this public debate on the situation in Haiti. This is an issue to which the Kingdom of Morocco attaches the greatest importance, given our long-standing relations of cooperation with that friendly country, to whose security and stability we are firmly committed, and our desire — which you share, Sir — for the harmonious development of the Caribbean region.

Before dealing with the situation in Haiti, I should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés — a good friend who was the representative of his country, Chile, here at the United Nations — for their tireless efforts and their dedication to the restoration of peace and

security and to strengthening the political process in Haiti.

We should also like to commend the efforts of the Multinational Interim Force in Haiti, which was made up of contingents from Canada, France and the United States and which carried out its responsibilities with great professionalism.

Haiti has given French-speaking countries, and the entire world, many eminent artists and poets. It is a country with great cultural vitality. But it is also a country that has, unfortunately, been the victim of confrontations and cycles of violence that have torn it apart, depriving it of the means to provide for the basic needs of its people and to address the challenges of sustainable development — a situation has been made worse by natural disasters.

In April, our Organization launched an appeal to Member countries to support the political transition by contributing to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which was established pursuant to resolution 1529 (2004). The Kingdom of Morocco had no hesitation in responding positively to that appeal. Indeed, in July we decided that, working in close cooperation with the Kingdom of Spain, a neighbouring country that is also committed to the stability and security of the Caribbean region, we would participate in MINUSTAH by providing an operational military contingent.

For Morocco, this is a matter of working to ensure the success of the United Nations Mission with a view to meeting all conditions for the normal resumption of the constitutional process in Haiti and the full functioning of the governmental authorities, within the framework of the rule of law.

We sincerely hope that security conditions will quickly be restored so that the Transitional Government can hold elections this year. The Moroccan contingent has been operational since November, and it is fully carrying out its responsibilities within MINUSTAH. Similarly, Moroccan and Spanish troops have been cooperating very successfully since taking over from the Chilean battalion at Fort Liberté and Terre Rouge in the north-east of Haiti. They now control the main crossing points on the border with the Dominican Republic and are working to stem smuggling and arms trafficking.

We are pleased that the many contributions to MINUSTAH have enabled it almost to reach full strength, as authorized by the Security Council, and to deploy throughout the country, thus ensuring that it has a permanent presence. Here, we would like to pay tribute to the effective and well-respected command that is being exercised by Brazil with great competence. The latest report of the Secretary-General on MINUSTAH, dated 18 November 2004, outlines the key tracks for moving forward in our thinking and in the efforts undertaken so that the Organization can lead the transitional process under way in Haiti to a successful conclusion.

We earnestly hope that the Transitional Government — with MINUSTAH's help, of course — will pursue without delay its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which should lead to the creation of the national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration recommended by the Secretary-General. The disarmament of armed groups is, in our view, the sine qua non for restoring stability on the island and for the success of the transitional process. Disarming militias will not only help to establish an appropriate environment for the forthcoming elections, but will also undoubtedly help promote the restoration of the rule of law on the island.

If re-establishing security is a necessary condition for the transitional process and for peace-building, we remain convinced that that process, if it is to have lasting success, must be accompanied by an in-depth political reform in which all actors commit to dialogue and cooperation aimed at organizing transparent and fair elections. It goes without saying that accomplishing those objectives is also largely a function of the degree and level of international assistance in the military, humanitarian, economic and political areas.

We welcome the fact that the financial institutions and donor countries responded to the Security Council appeal, in accordance with resolution 1576 (2004), which permitted significant disbursement of the funds pledged at the international donor conference on Haiti held in Washington on 19 and 20 July 2004. We hope that that financial support will continue, because the normalization of the situation in Haiti will largely depend on it. There is a link between purely military action and economic action aimed at meeting the people's basic needs.

As this new year begins, we express the hope that the Transitional Government and all the parties concerned will move towards peace, with MINUSTAH's help, within the framework of the mandate set by the Security Council. We are convinced that political harmony, once restored, will lead all Haitians to mobilize for the development and prosperity of their country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to express to you, Mr. President, the satisfaction of the Cuban delegation at your presence at today's Security Council meeting and to join all those who have congratulated the Argentine Republic on assuming the Council presidency for this month.

Haiti, cradle of the liberation struggles against colonialism in America and the first independent black republic in the Western Hemisphere, is today a country passed by and forgotten by the international community. It suffers because of its poverty; it endures chronic and structural underdevelopment; and it is submerged in violence and the permanent political crises not unfamiliar to foreign interests and the continued interventionism that has characterized its turbulent republican history. It is crumbling because of the devastating effects of successive natural disasters and the ecological damage to its deteriorated environment. The year 2004 was particularly tragic for the brotherly Haitian people.

Cuba, which feels united in its history and culture with the destiny of the Haitian people, continues to observe the developments in Haiti attentively and with concern. Our country, which has made supportive and unconditional cooperation a pillar of its relations with the Haitian people, believes that a massive contribution of financial and human resources to the economic and social rehabilitation and national reconciliation of that brotherly people is an inescapable duty of the international community.

Haiti is undoubtedly one of the clearest examples of the disastrous consequences of the current international order for underdeveloped countries, particularly in the case of a country that has had to endure more than 200 years of the most flagrant colonialism, exploitation and intervention.

My country supports all the efforts of the Haitian people to overcome existing tensions and to move forward a process of dialogue and national reconciliation, as well as the efforts of the Caribbean Community to find a peaceful and just solution to the Haitian situation. Such a solution will be possible only with the promotion of the economic and social development of the country and the development of its human resources and infrastructure. It is essential that the international community and international institutions increase their contributions and their permanent commitment to this Caribbean country. We hope that the United Nations and the international community as a whole will unite their efforts to attain that objective and that the pledges made at the international donor conference will materialize.

The members of the Council also must work to guarantee that we attain that objective. To focus exclusively on the so-called security problems in Haiti, without considering the fact that only development and progress will lead to peace and stability in that suffering Caribbean nation, would be a short-sighted and unrealistic view that would soon lead to failure. It is only through solidarity that the international community's duty and commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Haiti will fully materialize.

The uninterrupted cooperation that Cuba has maintained with Haiti for years shows how much can be achieved for that country through cooperation and development assistance. Cuba is cooperating with Haiti in various sectors, placing top priority on the health care sector. In more than five years of medical cooperation, 1,909 Cuban health care specialists have worked in Haiti. Their work has made it possible to hold nearly 6 million consultations. They have administered 756,000 vaccinations, assisted with 52,000 births and performed 75,000 surgical interventions. All those actions have enabled us to save more than 120,000 human lives.

Despite the critical situation in that country, Cuban volunteers, resolutely adhering to the principle of non-interference in Haitian internal affairs, have remained at their posts. Our medical brigade in particular, composed of 492 health-care workers and posted throughout the country's 10 departments, has been an example of disinterested co-operation, saving lives in the most difficult conditions.

Cuban cooperation with Haiti goes beyond direct medical assistance. It includes continuous training aimed at capacity-building in the short and medium term. More than 3,000 persons have participated in those programmes, and today there 889 Haitian students in Cuba, 606 of whom are attending our Latin American School of Medicine.

We wish to reiterate once again the firm resolve of the people and the Government of Cuba to continue to contribute, with all the means at our disposal, to achieving a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the situation in Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Uruguay, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay, which is among the 10 main troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions, responded promptly to the appeal for personnel for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by dispatching approximately 600 military and police personnel, who were among the first to be deployed. Uruguay is now the third-largest troop contributor to the Mission.

Our Government recently decided to increase the size of its military contingent in Haiti. The authorization to deploy an additional 200 troops was given a few days ago by the Uruguayan Parliament, and the new contingent is expected to arrive in Haiti by early February.

Uruguay is thus joining in the efforts of the United Nations in Haiti, not to impose solutions to the political problems that beset that tormented country, but, rather, to help its people and their authorities find their own solutions.

The Transitional Government bears the primary responsibility for leading the country towards the establishment and consolidation of a State based on the rule of law and on the functioning of democratic institutions. That can be achieved only if such leadership is exercised in accordance with democratic principles, ensuring strict respect for human rights. We would recall here the appeal made by the Security Council in its resolutions 1542 (2004) and 1576 (2004), particularly as regards the release of individuals detained for exclusively political reasons and against whom no charges have been brought, and the need for all necessary measures to be taken to prevent impunity for violations of human rights.

The recent agreement signed between the Stabilization Mission and the Haitian Government for general elections this year, as well as the pledges made by Canada, the European Union and the United States to finance those elections, represent very good news and are clear evidence that the stabilization process is under way.

We must also expedite the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and, accordingly, we hope that the Transitional Government will finalize its elaboration of the legal framework governing that process. Long-term development programmes must also be elaborated and implemented.

However, we believe that, given the deplorable economic and social conditions facing the majority of the Haitian population, priority must be given to short-term programmes designed immediately to satisfy the basic needs of Haitians such as food, housing and essential services.

At this stage, efforts should focus on alleviating the extreme poverty that affects the Haitian population. We must recall that Haiti ranks 153rd in the Human Development Index. Haiti is a country with a per-capital gross national product of $415, whose inhabitants lack the basic resources necessary for survival with a minimum of dignity. Under such circumstances, the normalization of the political and security situation appears to be, if not a mission impossible, at the very least an extremely difficult undertaking — unless there is a substantial improvement in the socio-economic framework within which the international community is providing assistance.

If the MINUSTAH presence is accompanied by material assistance that brings about even a slight improvement in living conditions, that will increase the population's confidence in the Mission and its willingness to cooperate, which will facilitate the reconciliation, disarmament and demobilization processes. That is why we consider it very important to provide MINUSTAH with the capacity it needs to rapidly implement short-term projects that have an immediate and tangible impact on the population, as

proposed by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on the Stabilization Mission.

I wish to express our satisfaction at the decision of the Economic and Social Council to reactivate its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, and we hope that its work will help to promote the country's recovery. The Advisory Group must coordinate its work with the Core Group established by the Security Council in paragraph 5 of its resolution 1542 (2004) in order to avoid any overlap.

The task of restoring order and security in Haiti and of creating conditions conducive to its development is of tremendous scope and will require considerable human and financial resources as well as perseverance and dedication on the part of all the individuals and institutions involved in the effort. We are certain that, led by Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés — whom we thank for his report this morning — this effort will ultimately be successful.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Bolivia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Quiroga (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to welcome your presence at this meeting and that of the ministers of Brazil, Chile, Guyana, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

I should like to congratulate the Argentine Republic and you personally, Sir, for having taken the initiative of convening this open debate of the Security Council, which, as has been the case on other occasions, will without a doubt contribute to a greater understanding of the situation in Haiti and increase the international community's awareness of the priority importance that the Latin American and Caribbean region attaches to the consolidation of the process of strengthening Haiti's institutions and the rule of law there.

We are concerned that this sister Caribbean republic has not yet been able to overcome the recurrent crises afflicting it, which are characterized by complex political, social, humanitarian, economic, financial and security problems which have kept the greater part of its population outside the development process.

Despite the efforts made since 1988 by the OAS and the United Nations, it has not been possible to uphold the principle of democratic legitimacy in Haiti for more than short periods of time.

Given the lessons learned from the United Nations stabilization Mission in Haiti in 1994, and in view of the gravity and urgency of the situation, the Bolivian delegation last year supported resolution 1529 (2004), which, at the request of the Interim Government of Haiti, authorized the deployment on the territory of that country of a Multinational Force and requested the Secretary-General to begin preparations for a stabilization force — MINUSTAH — which was concretized by resolution 1542 (2004) under Chapter VII.

We note with regret the deterioration of the security situation and the increasingly tense political climate referred to in last November's report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/908), and we encourage the Transitional Government to continue to pursue measures aimed at restoring the democratic process, full respect for human rights and the rule of law in the Republic of Haiti.

The report of the Secretary-General describes the progress achieved in the deployment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the activities of its various contingents, including those of the nine Latin American countries that contributed officials, military troops, civil police and formed police units.

We note with satisfaction that the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations have been implemented in a positive manner, through the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) on electoral assistance in Haiti and through the contacts established with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to assess the electoral assistance that its members would contribute to support the reconciliation and recovery efforts of the people of Haiti.

I wish to express our thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, for his briefing and to Mr. Luigi Einaudi, Acting Secretary General of the OAS, for his valuable information and views. I also underline the highly illuminating information the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund has shared with the Council.

With respect to humanitarian action, we agree with the report that is important that MINUSTAH demonstrate its effectiveness through actions having tangible benefits for the population. That is a particularly sensitive matter for the small island developing States most vulnerable to natural disasters, as has been tragically demonstrated.

Moreover, security — the indispensable requirement for safeguarding the political transition process leading to a participatory democracy inclusive of all segments of society — is undoubtedly one of the most important challenges for MINUSTAH in its work to support the Transitional Government: it involves not only restoring the population's confidence but also implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti testifies to the commitment of the international community, in particular of our entire region, to the people of Haiti. Ensuring MINUSTAH's success is a challenge and inescapable responsibility for the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the task of maintaining a genuine zone of peace and development in our region.

We reaffirm Bolivia's support for Haiti in its efforts, and we call upon the entire international community to continue to extend its decisive and long-term cooperation, which will enable MINUSTAH to fully carry out its mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Honduras, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Suazo (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address the Council under your able leadership, Mr. Minister. We thank in particular the delegation of Argentina for its wise decision to convene this public meeting of the Council on the situation in Haiti, a brotherly country with which Honduras maintains excellent relations of friendship and cooperation. Since the creation of the United Nations we and Haiti have sat side by side, as we do at this table.

We welcome the interest — heightened by you, Sir — which has led to the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Chile, Barbados and the Dominican Republic; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés; and the Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Mr. Luigi Einaudi. We welcome with particular optimism the message delivered to the Council by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti.

The participation of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in Haiti prior to the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), in 1993, and the subsequent missions leading to today's United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), cause us to recall our participation in the Council's debates on the need to restore democratic and constitutional order in that brotherly country. In those debates, Argentina and Honduras, which were members of the Council at the time, were filled with optimism and hope. A decade later, in January 2005, we understand how difficult it can be to achieve some objectives, no matter how simple they may seem.

At that time, Honduras introduced the question of the humanitarian situation in Haiti in the General Assembly. It was duly followed up until the item was biennialized and then practically forgotten. The two times the General Assembly considered the item, there was neither a resolution nor a debate on the humanitarian situation in Haiti. The international community shares the blame.

The passing of a decade and the repetitious nature of the situation today would seem discouraging. However, it is preferable to underline the positive elements and state that we will not forget the people of Haiti. We will continue to seek the best formula to remedy their problems and help them to achieve political and socio-economic recovery. The Millennium Development Goals are the same for all, but not all have the same resources and means to achieve them. For that reason, the convening of this meeting leads us to envision a new opportunity and renewed hope for Haiti.

The report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2004/908) unambiguously states that

> "Haitians will vote in local elections on 6 November 2005. On 27 November 2005, the first round of national elections (presidential and legislative) will be held, with the option of a second round of voting '— if necessary, according to our understanding —' on 18 December 2005". (*para. 29*)

The report adds that

> "The memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) concerning electoral assistance to Haiti was signed on 2 and 3 November 2004". (*para. 31*)

The political landscape seems to be becoming clearer, and we hope that the timetable can be adhered to without setbacks.

With respect to humanitarian problems, the situation is very different. In that regard, we make a special appeal to the international community in connection with the fragility of the environment and the need for international assistance to continue, as *The New York Times* recently put it, beyond the period that the media keeps the crisis situation on the front page. The international community must not forget its long-term commitments when the situation is no longer news or, in particular, when faced with the constraints that always arise when such commitments are carried out.

The report of the Secretary-General is clear on the devastation and the destruction of the environment caused by the recent floods in Haiti, but today that is no longer news. Tragically, another, unprecedented natural disaster has struck brotherly countries of the Asia Pacific region — and we express our solidarity to those countries. It has led us quickly to forget the more than 2,000 dead and the 30,000 others affected in Haiti.

Haiti is also seriously afflicted by pandemics such as HIV/AIDS. An additional effort could be made in the area of cooperation to reinforce health-care programmes in the country. We make an appeal to the international community in that regard.

Haiti has a special place in the history of the international community, in particular of Latin America. It was among the first of the discovered lands. It achieved independence in 1804, and in 1816 it gave refuge and unreserved support to the liberator of America, Simón Bolívar. Thus, we owe a debt to that brotherly republic. Honduras expresses its solidarity in these difficult times and raises its voice so that the Haitian people will not be forgotten again.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of El Salvador, to whom I give the floor.

Ms. Gallardo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to voice the satisfaction of the Government of El Salvador at your initiative to convene an open Security Council debate on the situation in Haiti. We take this opportunity also to express our confidence in the diplomatic leadership of Argentina in guiding the affairs of the Council.

My Government attaches great importance to this topic, not only because of its implications for regional peace and security, but also because of the human tragedy and the pressing needs of Haitian civil society at present. The social harmony to which it aspires requires progress towards the creation and subsequent consolidation of democratic institutions that can improve living conditions and strengthen the rule of law.

This debate provides an opportunity to reiterate El Salvador's political will to continue contributing, within our limited possibilities, to the stabilization process that the international community and the Transitional Government are carrying out in Haiti. This process is taking place in the context of the international community's action, in the global, multilateral context of the United Nations, through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), as well as in the regional context, through the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Rio Group. It must continue to be consolidated.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General on his endeavours and leadership in this process.

El Salvador shares the concern of the Transitional Government of Haiti about the deteriorating security situation, particularly in Port-au-Prince, and the resulting tense political climate. The existence of armed groups, and the intention of some of them to confront the Transitional Government, continues to be among the main threats to peace and security in Haiti. My delegation hopes that the Transitional Government's proposed measures will contribute to reducing levels of violence and will promote a political climate conducive to tolerance, dialogue and negotiation. As the Council is aware, the Government of El Salvador is convinced that those are the required tools to seek and consolidate the peace. Our own history has proven that.

The coordination efforts of MINUSTAH and the National Police in Port-au-Prince, intended to restore the population's trust in the capabilities of the Haitian National Police, have proven to be an effective practice in making progress. In that context, it is important to make a greater effort to strengthen the national commission on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We must recall that in the process of peacebuilding in El Salvador, that was an essential step to which the international community attached a great deal of importance.

As to the civilian police component of MINUSTAH, at the request of the United Nations, the Government of El Salvador is considering the possibility of making available more police officers, particularly women, to be included in the overall international effort, and in conjunction with other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Government of El Salvador is convinced that stabilization and peacebuilding in Haiti must be based on promoting dialogue and national reconciliation. In that regard, we are gratified at the positive assessment provided by Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as a result of his exploratory meetings with political leaders and representatives of civil society, who have stated their readiness for a national dialogue.

The Transitional Government's commitment to organize free, fair and legitimate elections in 2005 and to hand over power to a president to be elected on 7 February 2006 is another key element that can contribute effectively to the success of dialogue and national reconciliation. Here, El Salvador's experience might be useful to Haiti, and we shall place it at their disposal under any agreed modalities and format. In this context, my delegation is gratified at the signing on 3 November 2004 of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Organization of American States on electoral assistance for Haiti. It sets out respective responsibilities and establishes a committee for electoral cooperation to ensure that the assistance provided will be effective and consistent.

In addition to the gravity of the political situation, it is important for us to recognize the negative impact of natural disasters, in particular the flooding that occurred in southern Haiti in May 2004, as well as the torrential rains in the wake of Tropical Storm Jeanne in September of the same year. Undeniably, the need to respond immediately to the disaster was a further challenge for MINUSTAH, which had to temporarily redeploy its military and police personnel to Gonaïves to support the Argentine troops in providing security at distribution points and warehouses, and for humanitarian convoys. In my delegation's opinion, the international community's response was excellent and effective. However, Haiti's manifest vulnerability to natural disasters, along with other pending development tasks, are a double challenge for the national authorities and the international community. We must not forget that political stabilization must go hand in hand with strengthening national capacity to confront both challenges simultaneously.

In this respect, the Government of El Salvador endorses the commitment of the Rio Group to coordinate with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and donor countries to ensure prompt disbursement of the funds and resources pledged for stabilization in Haiti. We also are pleased with the decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council to reactivate its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's satisfaction with the actions adopted by the Security Council with respect to the proposals made in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2004/908, and in particular the extension of MINUSTAH's mandate for an additional 18-month period, until 31 May 2006. El Salvador is convinced that the engagement of the United Nations at this stage of the stabilization process in Haiti is fundamental for successful and lasting national reconciliation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés to respond to comments and questions offered in the course of the meeting.

Mr. Valdés (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), I would like to speak briefly to thank all speakers for their statements; they have been most helpful in enriching our vision of the determination of the Security Council and the international community with respect to our task in Haiti. I would like especially to thank everyone for the

very generous — and undeserved — words addressed to me personally. I shall take them as an expression of trust in the United Nations Mission, in the soldiers and the police officers who are helping support the restoration of security in Haiti, and in the United Nations officials who, on a daily basis, provide support to Haitian society in so many different areas to bring about development and reconciliation.

Throughout today's statements, I could note that delegations spoke of the priority that MINUSTAH attaches — and must attach — to the disarmament of all illegal groups within Haitian society that continue to possess weapons. I noted also that delegations underscored the need for Haitians to begin a process of national dialogue and reconciliation, as well as the need for the United Nations Mission to provide Haitian society with technical and political support to ensure that the dialogue yields positive results for the elections that will take place this year and for the improved governance that will be required to establish a democratic, legitimate Government in early 2006.

I have already had an opportunity to tell you, my dear friend Rafael Bielsa, how much I value this meeting, as well as Argentina's decision to convene this open Security Council debate to discuss the situation in Haiti. This meeting is being held at a time when the United Nations Mission, with the support of the Transitional Government of Haiti and the growing participation of Haitian society, has effectively halted the disintegration of that society and its spiral towards the abyss. We now need to climb back up the slope. To do so we need to promote a process of reconciliation and dialogue among Haitians, strengthen institutions, fine tune the work of the police and, as has often been said at this meeting, maintain the international community's economic support for projects that will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the Haitian people in the coming months and throughout the year. This meeting once again confirms that the main contribution of the Organization in support of developing countries experiencing internal disintegration depends on ongoing work and support and on the ability to reassure such countries that they themselves have the capacity to extricate themselves from their predicament, given that there is international support for them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative for his clear comments and for his kind words addressed to me.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council reaffirms the comprehensive mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as set forth in resolutions 1542 (2004) and 1576 (2004), and expresses its support for the United Nations presence in Haiti as long as necessary.

"The Security Council underlines that national reconciliation, security and economic development remain key to stability in Haiti, and, in that regard, stresses that all Member States and international organizations, especially those in the region, should support the Transitional Government of Haiti in those efforts.

"The Security Council underlines the important role of MINUSTAH in ensuring a secure environment and commends the recent joint operations by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police (HNP), in particular against all illegal armed groups. It notes however that further urgent action is needed to continue to improve the security situation. The Council again calls on all parties in Haiti to respect human rights and to renounce the use of violence to advance their goals.

"The Security Council encourages the Transitional Government to create without delay the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), to address all armed groups, particularly former members of the military, in a comprehensive manner. It notes that any compensation should be part of a comprehensive and durable solution.

"The Security Council renews its appeal for the prompt disbursement of the funds pledged by international financial institutions and donor countries at the International Donors Conference on Haiti held in July 2004. It recognizes the need for MINUSTAH, other organs of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and Member States to assist the Transitional Government in the preparation and implementation of development projects in Haiti, as well as quick-impact projects. The Council reiterates the need to assist the Transitional Government in establishing a long-term

development strategy for Haiti, in accordance with the priorities set forth in the Interim Cooperation Framework.

"The Security Council welcomes recent steps taken by the Transitional Government of Haiti to release some individuals being held without formal charge or trial, and calls on the Transitional Government to review all such cases in order to ensure full respect for due process and the rule of law. In this regard, the Council calls on MINUSTAH to continue its support for the provision of human rights training to Haitian judicial, police and correctional authorities to ensure adherence to international norms and standards.

"The Security Council encourages the Transitional Government to continue to take steps towards a comprehensive and inclusive national dialogue and reconciliation process and calls upon all political actors in Haiti to renounce violence and join this dialogue without delay. The Council fully supports MINUSTAH's continuing facilitation of this process.

"The Security Council calls upon the Transitional Government, with the assistance of MINUSTAH and the Organization of American States (OAS), to take urgently the necessary measures to ensure the holding of free and fair elections in 2005 and the subsequent transfer of power to elected authorities, and welcomes the recent decisions of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) in its preparations. It encourages all political parties that have rejected violence to participate in the electoral process.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to organize a mission to Haiti before 1 June 2005, possibly in conjunction with a mission of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

"The Security Council expresses its gratitude to the countries that have contributed personnel to the Mission. It urges troop — and police-contributing countries to complete the authorized strength of MINUSTAH as soon as possible, stressing that prompt completion of this step is an essential requirement for the continuing success of the operation.

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdés, and commends the work done by MINUSTAH and all of its personnel."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/1.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti has asked to speak. If no member of the Council objects, I propose to give him the floor.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti.

Mr. Siméon (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): As this meeting of the Council draws to a close, I should like very briefly to again thank the brotherly country of Argentina for having organized this special debate, and to convey to you, Mr. President, my friend Rafael Bielsa, heartfelt congratulations for the skill with which you have conducted the proceedings.

I should also like to thank all those who responded to his appeal today. The level at which they participated demonstrates the level of solidarity that they feel with my country. I would like to thank them for their acts of solidarity and for the understanding that they have shown of our problems, which has been apparent from all of their statements. I would also like to thank them for having sincerely voiced their concerns and offered their advice. I promise that that I will report back to my Government and, through the media, to my people and to the social and professional organizations in my country. I would also like to say that, with their support, we will move forward in the future — I know that their support will always be friendly and based on feelings of solidarity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I cannot conclude without thanking the Secretariat, whose staff members tirelessly provided water and other essential logistical support, as well as the interpreters, without whom the Security Council would be a Tower of Babel.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5111

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5111th meeting

Thursday, 13 January 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bielsa	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Danforth

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-20818 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Farewell to the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador John C. Danforth

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the last time that Ambassador John Danforth will participate in the Council's deliberations in his current capacity as Permanent Representative of the United States, I wish to take this opportunity to express to him, on behalf of the members of the Council, our appreciation of him as a colleague and friend. Ambassador Danforth will likely best be remembered as having initiated and led the Security Council's meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 and 19 November last year, marking the first time in over 30 years that the Security Council met on the African continent. Indeed, the fact that the parties were able to sign the comprehensive peace agreement in Nairobi on 9 January is due in no small part to the Council's efforts, under the leadership of Ambassador Danforth, to encourage the Naivasha process during its meetings in the Kenyan capital.

In bidding Ambassador Danforth a fond farewell, the other members of the Council and I wish him every success in his new endeavours.

Mr. Danforth (United States of America): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your very kind words, and I hope that the Council will indulge me for just a few words of my own.

Let me say what an excellent experience I have had here. It has lasted only a little over six months, but I can remember when President Bush telephoned me and asked me if I would serve as the United States representative to the United Nations. I asked the President whether he believed this was an important job and whether he thought that the United Nations was important, and he assured me that, in his view, it was. On that representation, I agreed to take this job, and the experience that I have had serving here has proved to me that the United Nations is indeed very, very important. I think that it is important to the world, and I think that it is important to the United States.

Clearly, as you pointed out, Sir, with respect to the Sudan, the Security Council did play an instrumental role. I do not think that there is any doubt about that. The parties recognize that. The various peacekeeping efforts that we have put in place, the United Nations response to the tsunami disaster — all of these are instances where the United Nations has demonstrated its essential quality.

I personally have been impressed by my colleagues on the Security Council — impressed by their seriousness, impressed by their competence, and particularly impressed by the way in which very diverse nations have joined together in serious efforts to address important questions. It struck me as odd, in the first month or so, how we would get all tied up in wordsmithing — the difference between "demands" and "urges", or the difference between "measures" and "sanctions", and so on. But, thinking about it, it really is evidence of the fact that people from all over the world are trying to reach out together to bridge differences and define formulations that bridge differences and allow us to move forward in addressing matters of very serious concern.

A lot of people have criticized the United Nations, especially recently, and there is a lot to criticize in the United Nations — the oil-for-food issue, the problem of abuses by peacekeepers, especially in the Congo. There will always be things to criticize, but those points of criticism should not, and do not, detract from the essential value of the United Nations.

Insofar as my own country is concerned, a lot of people have voiced concern, even opposition, to the United Nations. I think the reasons for that are understandable. People have complained, "Well, the United Nations does not always support the United States", especially on the issue of the war in Iraq. Various representatives of various countries and people in the Secretariat from time to time make comments that we would rather not have them make. I would simply say in that connection that the United States is a big country, a very strong country. It is a well-meaning country; it really tries to do the right thing. Nobody likes opposition, and nobody likes criticism. But simply because the United States is big and strong, it is important that we be particularly open to the views of other people and to views that sometimes are different from our own.

We have a concept in our own country called "checks and balances", a governmental concept. It is very important, I think, the stronger you are, to be a country that listens and that takes on board the views

of others, even though we may not end up agreeing with those views. The United Nations is a place where we can speak, where the United States can speak; it is also a place where can listen, whether we end up agreeing or disagreeing with what we hear. So, when President Bush said to me that the United Nations is important, it seems to me, as I leave this post, that it is even more important than I thought it was when I came here. The United Nations is important for the welfare and stability of the world, and it is important for the welfare of the United States as well.

Mr. President, I thank you for your very kind remarks, and I want to thank my colleagues on the Council for their friendship and for their support these last six months.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the very kind words he addressed to us.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Prendergast: In my briefing last month, I highlighted the potential for positive change presented by current developments in the Middle East. There remain many risks and the possibility of setbacks, but I am pleased to be able to report this morning that the overall trend of recent events tends to confirm that there exists a real opportunity to begin the long-delayed implementation of the road map's provisions and to start moving once again towards a settlement of the conflict.

A new Palestinian President has been elected in a vote that is reported to have been conducted in a politically competitive, yet peaceful, atmosphere. We welcome President Mahmoud Abbas as the representative of the Palestinian people and extend our congratulations to him and to the entire Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory. We also congratulate the Palestinian Central Elections Commission for the organization of credible and genuine elections under challenging conditions. The Palestinians have thus successfully completed another critical step in the historic democratic transition in the occupied Palestinian territory.

A total of 775,146 Palestinians cast their votes in the 9 January poll, 60,000 more than voted in the 1996 elections. Some 800 international observers and 7,000 national observers monitored the vote. The observation missions are agreed that, in the main, the election was contested vigorously and administered fairly. The observation mission sent by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Carter Center said in its preliminary statement on the vote, on 10 January:

> "The election was contested vigorously and administered fairly. Election day was orderly and generally peaceful. [...] The successful organization of this election demonstrates the potential for the start of a new era in Palestinian politics and the development of representative and accountable governance."

Similarly, the European Union (EU) Electoral Observation Mission's Chief Observer, former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, stated:

> "As a result of this electoral process, the Palestinian people will benefit from a democratically elected and internationally recognized leadership, which will enable them to start to face the difficult challenges that lie ahead."

Israel played a commendable part in facilitating the elections, although some problems remained and observers had to raise the issue of restrictions on the freedom of movement. Overall, the situation remained

calm on election day, as Israeli forces generally allowed free movement and reduced their own activity inside the Palestinian areas.

The United Nations continued its long-standing work in support of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission and provided technical assistance for the preparation and conduct of the elections. We also established a United Nations Liaison Support Unit, which facilitated contacts with Palestinian and Israeli authorities and extended assistance to many of the international observers present in the occupied Palestinian territory. Our technical support to the Palestinians will continue, with a focus on the upcoming elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, scheduled for 17 July.

The Council will also recall that the first round of elections to municipal councils was held in 26 communities on 23 December, with some 150,000 eligible voters choosing from among more than 800 candidates. Those elections — the first at the municipal level since 1967 — witnessed a high-local voter turnout of up to 81 per cent. One encouraging result of the vote was that women won 51 out of a total of 297 seats in the 26 municipalities. The next round of local elections is due to take place in 11 communities in the Gaza Strip on 27 January.

The commitment of the Palestinian people to democracy and its institutions is a strong foundation on which President Abbas can build. We look forward to working with the new President of the Palestinian Authority on the implementation of the road map and towards the realization of a viable two-State solution.

There is not only a new Palestinian leadership. There is also a new Israeli coalition Government in place to tackle the implementation of Prime Minister Sharon's withdrawal initiative. The new Cabinet, in which the Likud party has been joined by Labor, as well as United Torah Judaism, is expected to decide later this month on the evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank.

As we have previously stated in this Council, we welcome and support the Israeli disengagement initiative as an important step towards achieving our common objective of an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable and contiguous Palestinian State alongside a secure Israel.

Set in this context, Prime Minister Sharon's initiative provides a real opportunity to move ahead. The plan should be implemented as part of the road map and in coordination between the new Israeli Government and the new Palestinian leadership. In this context, it is welcome news that Prime Minister Sharon and the Palestinian President have already spoken of their intention to meet in the coming weeks. As I said here last month, the United Nations remains ready to assist the parties to maintain momentum at this crucial time and to shoulder their respective burdens.

More generally, we believe that the international community will need to engage proactively to help the process along and to determine how best it can contribute to the revitalization of a sustainable peace process between the parties. The present period of opportunity challenges not only the parties, but all of us.

Situations such as the present one in the Middle East are dynamic. They either evolve positively or they regress. They do not stand still for long. This underlines the need to develop momentum in the peace process and to maintain it. Confidence-building measures can be very helpful in restoring trust on both sides. I am glad to report the very positive development of Israel's release of 159 Palestinian prisoners on 27 December.

Yet, although the potential for positive change and progress continues to be enormous, both have, literally, come under fire on an almost daily basis since my last briefing. In the past month, 64 Palestinians and 3 Israelis have been killed, and 243 Palestinians and 46 Israelis have been wounded.

In the six weeks before last weekend's elections, Palestinian militants fired a total of 210 Qassam rockets and mortar shells against Israeli settlements in Gaza and civilian targets inside Israel. One Israeli settler and one Thai worker were killed as a result of those attacks. This marked increase in attacks came despite the admirable public calls by PLO Chairman and now President Mahmoud Abbas to end rocket attacks against Israeli targets. We hope that the new Palestinian leadership will meet its security reform obligations under the road map and do its utmost to prevent such attacks and bring to justice the perpetrators.

In the same period, Israeli forces conducted a total of 40 military incursions and bulldozing

operations, causing death and injury to Palestinian civilians as well as militants. In one tragic incident, on 4 January, seven Palestinian civilians were killed, including at least five children from the same family, when an IDF tank shell hit an agricultural area in Beit Lahia. During a military operation in Khan Younis that ended on 19 December, 11 Palestinians, at least three of whom were civilian, were killed, and 50, including several children, were injured. Once again, we have to remind Israel of its legal obligations under international law to ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians and to refrain from the disproportionate use of force.

We call on both parties to exercise restraint and to focus their efforts now on ending the violence, the terror and the military operations that kill and injure civilians and destroy civilian property and infrastructure. In that context, it is positive to note the new Palestinian President's reiteration of his long-standing position of advocating an end to the armed uprising as the way to confront the occupation. His call appears to be in accord with majority opinion among Palestinians. In a poll conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion on 21 December, some 60 per cent of Palestinians expressed support for an end to armed struggle.

As the Council is aware, the General Assembly, in its resolution ES-10/15, requested that the Secretary-General establish a register of damage in connection with the barrier. The Secretary-General, on Tuesday, 11 January 2005, sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly setting out a framework for the register. It will consist of an independent board, legal and technical experts and a small secretariat — a registry. The board will have overall responsibility for the register and will establish rules and regulations governing the work of the registry. We have aimed to develop a structure that will focus on the technical task of gathering claims of damage relating to the construction of the barrier. Details of the staffing, size and cost of the office remain to be worked out, and on those issues the Secretary-General will revert to the Assembly in due course.

The construction of the barrier and restrictions on movement in the form of checkpoints, curfews and the permit system are the chief reasons for the continuing socio-economic crisis in the Palestinian areas. As we have repeatedly stated, lifting restrictions on freedom of movement is an indispensable ingredient of economic recovery. World Bank President James Wolfensohn reiterated during a recent visit to the area that additional financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority could be considered feasible only if Israel eased the existing restrictions. That remains a vital measure to be taken.

The Palestinian Authority's stability — and with it, prospects for real and tangible reform and political progress — is crucially dependent on a sound fiscal base. Although the Palestinian Authority exhibited strong revenue performance in 2004, it has remained under pressure, owing to a much lower disbursement of external budget support than originally envisaged and to a growing wage bill. December salaries could be paid only as a result of a welcome $20 million contribution from the United States and the release of arrears by the Government of Israel. Continued financial support for the Palestinian Authority remains of great significance.

I have listed the positive developments of the last month, as well as the difficulties. How can we best assist the parties to move forward towards peace and to avoid the painful and all-too-frequent setbacks suffered in the past? For that to be done effectively, we need to start by being clear about our own priorities. Also, it is crucial that we all work together, guided by the framework of the Quartet and the road map process, as agreed by the parties and by the Council. Thirdly, we need to impress on Israelis and Palestinians that both of them must act towards fulfilling their road map obligations.

Both parties have important steps to take. Israeli settlement activity — including the natural growth of settlements — has not been frozen, as Israel is obliged to do under the road map. During 2004, according to recent reports, the number of people living in West Bank and Gaza strip settlements rose by 6 per cent. Even the settlements in the Gaza Strip that are slated for evacuation grew by 7 per cent; indeed, three of them recorded growth rates of between 21 and 29 per cent over the previous year. On the Palestinian side, we want to see the establishment of credible and reformed institutions which make a tangible impact in terms of efforts by the Palestinian Authority to put an end to the violence and terror.

In this immediate transitional stage, it is crucial to support Palestinian reform efforts — especially in the areas of security and governance — and to ensure

that the Palestinian Authority is financially secure and able to meet the humanitarian needs of the population. In that context, we welcome Prime Minister Blair's initiative to convene an international meeting, and we believe it will provide a valuable opportunity to discuss important issues on the agenda of the new Palestinian leadership. We consider that initiative to be an important step towards implementing the road map and achieving its full objectives.

It is also urgent to encourage both parties to resume contacts and work together to prepare for an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and part of the West Bank. Coordination between the parties and active support from the international community are needed to achieve a successful disengagement plan that will lead to further steps on the implementation of the road map and the resumption of full peace negotiations.

A stark illustration of how fragile the situation is in the Middle East was recently given on another front of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Six months of relative quiet along the Blue Line were disrupted on 9 January, the day of the Palestinian election. The Security Council was briefed on Monday about the details of that deplorable incident, in which a Hizbullah roadside bomb attack against an Israeli military patrol vehicle killed one Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldier and wounded three others, and subsequent IDF tank and machine-gun fire killed a French officer serving with the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon and wounded a Swedish colleague.

The Hizbullah attack and its aftermath constituted grave violations of the Blue Line. In a statement, the Secretary-General condemned the military escalation and urged both parties to exercise maximum restraint. He also underscored the responsibility of both Lebanon and Israel to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel deployed in the region.

Prior to that incident, the situation along the Blue Line had been relatively calm since my last briefing to the Council. The only violations that had taken place were Israeli overflights. Seventeen Israeli air violations of the Blue Line were recorded — nine of them on a single day, 29 December, when a total of 20 Israeli jets crossed the Blue Line into Lebanese airspace. Both the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Southern Lebanon expressed their concern over those violations and reiterated the Organization's call on the Israeli authorities to halt them.

There has been no progress yet on the Syrian-Israeli track, despite yet another offer of mediation, this time by the Government of Turkey. The resumption and completion of peace negotiations between Israel and Syria and the implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) remain indispensable ingredients of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Let me close by saying that there is a palpable sense of expectation of real, substantial and sustainable change in the region. Optimism has — at least for now — replaced long and bitter years of disillusion, despair and hopelessness. The potential is there; but so is the danger that the fragile new process might falter and fail. We must not allow that to happen.

Israelis and Palestinians have a great deal of work ahead of them. Their respective new leaderships are in a position to carry out much of it, but they will continue to need our help. We, the international community — particularly through the Quartet — need to lend our support, our assistance, our active engagement, to make clear to both parties that we expect real progress. The parties, in turn, need to take those steps necessary to implement the road map, to halt the bloodshed and suffering, and to move forward to achieve the goal of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in which two independent and viable States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Prendergast for his comprehensive briefing, keen analysis and balanced observations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the Palestinian presidential election held on 9 January 2005. It commends the credible and fair character of the vote and congratulates the Palestinian people, who demonstrated their commitment to democracy by participating in the election under challenging conditions. The Council pays tribute to the Central Elections Commission, which played a key role in ensuring the successful conclusion of the election, and

expresses its appreciation for the contribution of international observers and for the support of the United Nations.

"The Security Council congratulates the newly elected President of the Palestinian Authority on his election.

"The Security Council looks forward to the convening of the Palestinian legislative elections in the near future and affirms the Council's continuing support for the Palestinian people in their democratic process.

"The Security Council supports the Palestinian Authority and its efforts to pursue the process of strengthening institutions.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of enhanced and expeditious international assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority.

"The Security Council stresses the need for the full implementation of the Quartet road map, as endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003), for the creation of an independent, viable, democratic and sovereign State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

"The Security Council calls upon Israelis and Palestinians to relaunch a genuine political process and advance towards a just and lasting peace in the region."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/2.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5112

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5112nd meeting

Tuesday, 18 January 2005, 10.35 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mayoral	(Argentina)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Identical letters dated 6 January 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (S/2005/9)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-21082 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Identical letters dated 6 January 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (S/2005/9)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/9, which contains the text of a letter dated 6 January 2005 from the Secretary-General. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2005/31, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1581 (2005).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.